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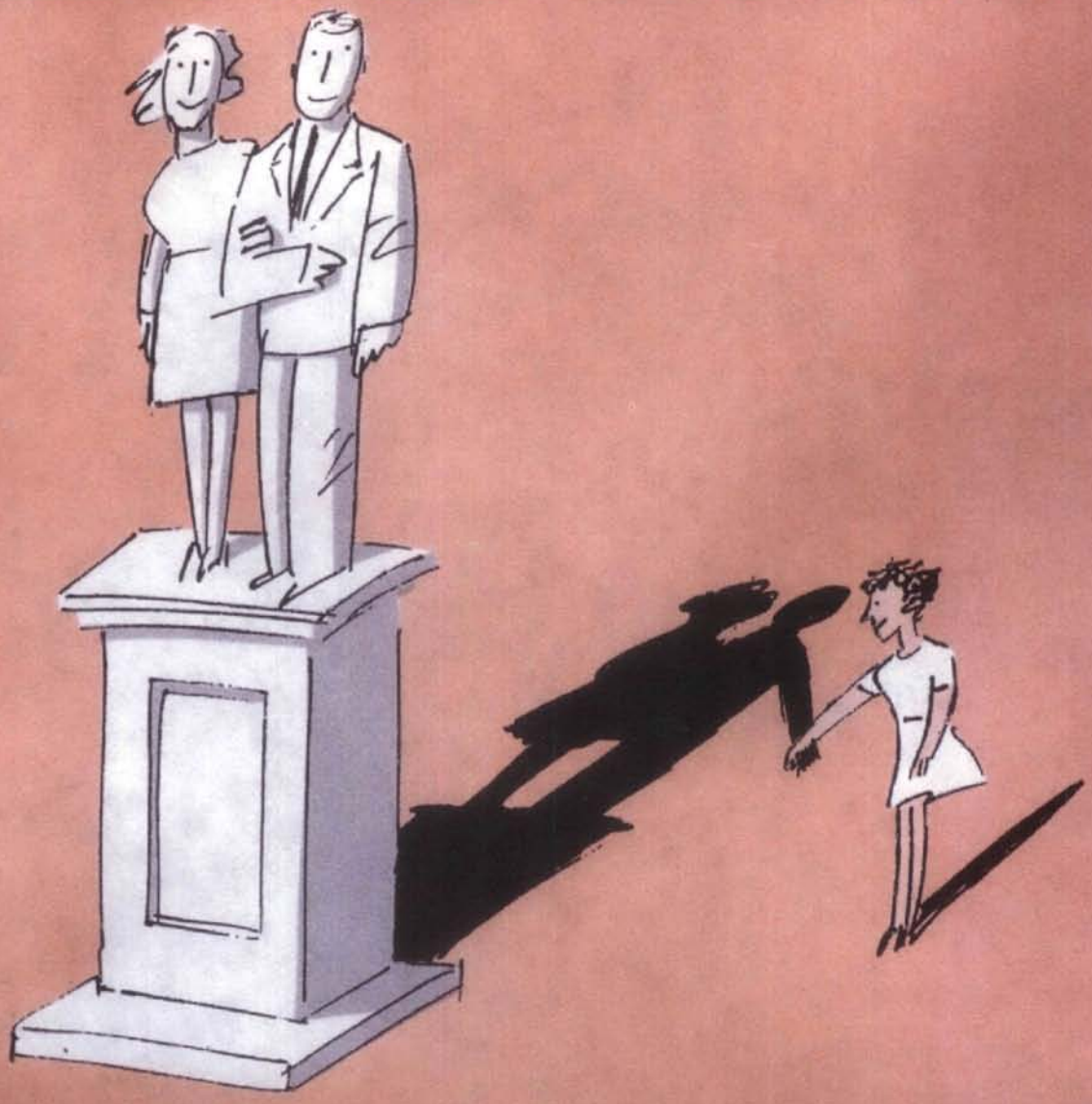

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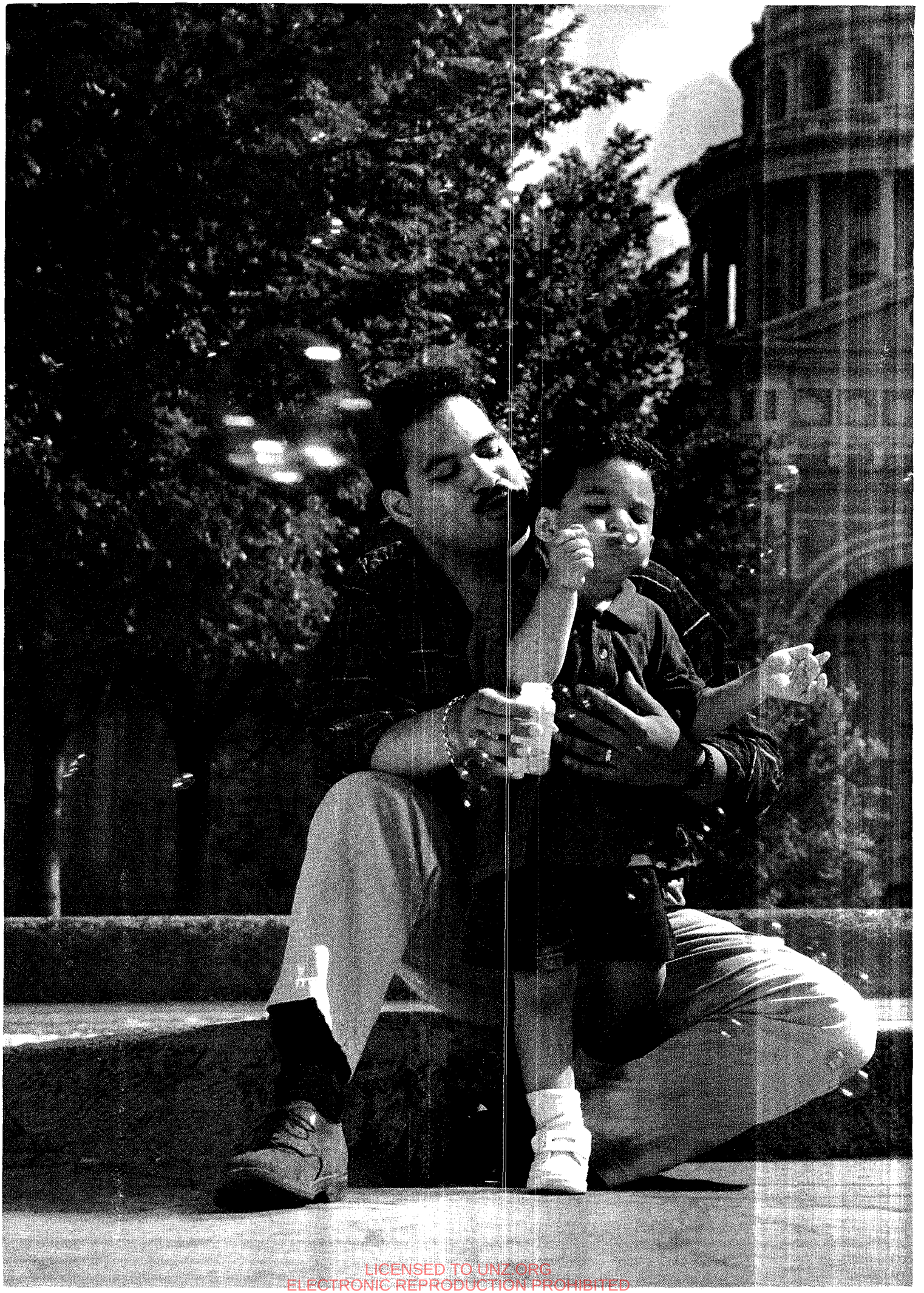

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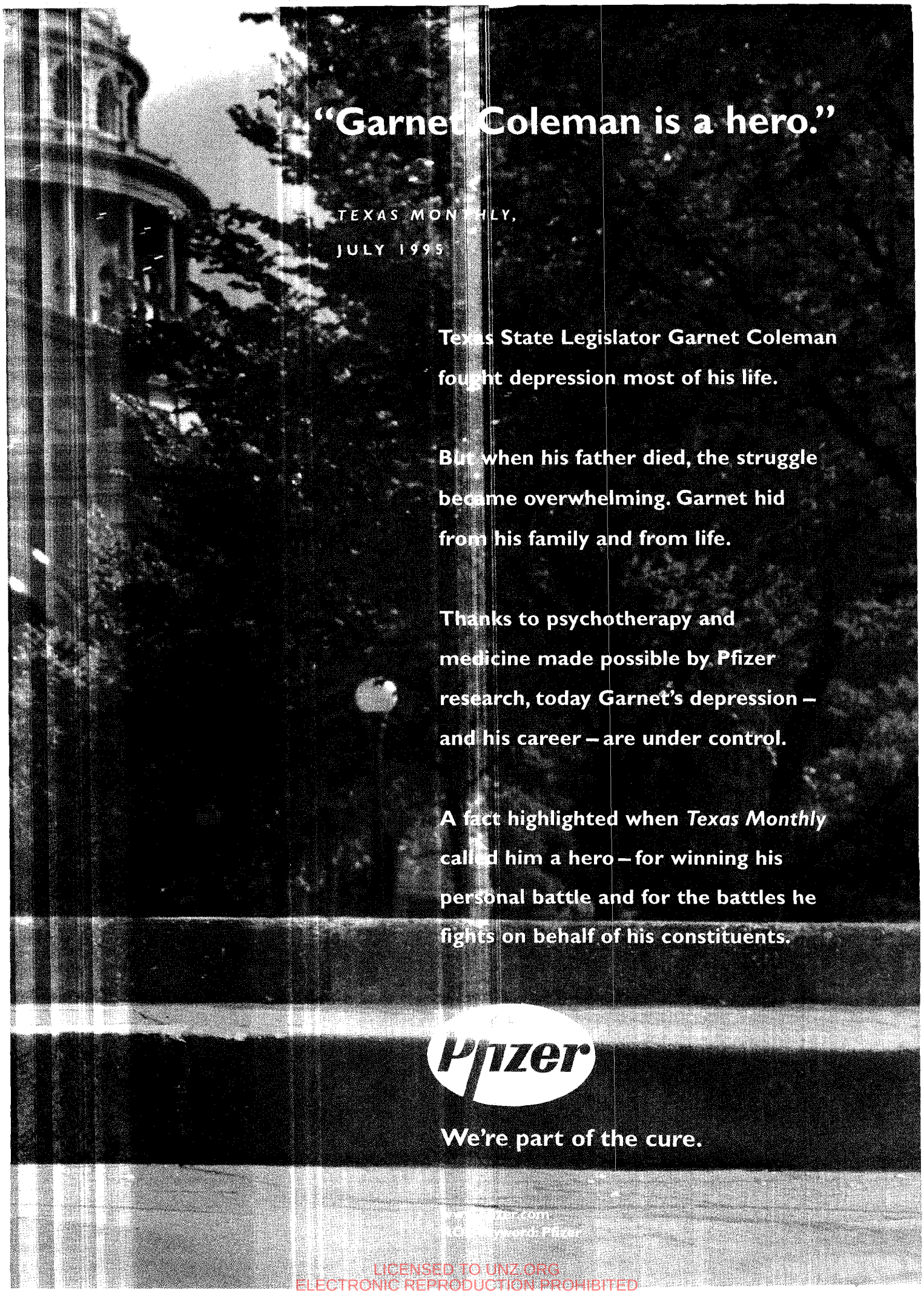
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FROM WASHINGTON

Taking sides

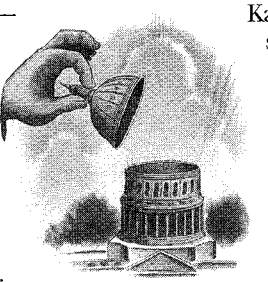
In Bosnia, we have arrived at the moment of our testing. The Dayton peace accords, which Richard Holbrooke bullied the Serbs, the Croats and the Bosnian Muslims into signing two years ago, contained two core promises. The first was that the war's serious criminals, most of them Serbs, would be arrested and brought to trial. The second was that the ethnically cleansed populations (at least those among the cleansed who were still alive) would be allowed to return to the areas from which they had been driven and to reclaim their homes. Upon the fulfillment of these promises rested any hopes for a real peace in ex-Yugoslavia. But Dayton purposely avoided the question of who would do the fulfilling, and how.

This was not entirely a bad thing. A peace with a hole at its center was in the short term preferable to no peace at all, if there was a commitment to filling the hole later. Something had to be done to end the immediate horror, and neither the Serbs nor the Croats would have signed a peace accord that proposed the imminent arrest of major war criminals and the imminent return of seized property and cleansed land to their rightful owners. They signed because they needed some respite from war so as to consolidate their gains, and because they figured there was a reasonable chance that the hole in Dayton would never be filled.

For a long time, this appeared to be a good bet, as the NATO forces charged with keeping the peace in Bosnia kept it in the most decorous fashion, never attempting anything impolite, such as—oh, I don't know—arresting Radovan Karadzic. The criminals remained criminal, the dispossessed remained dispossessed, the stolen goods remained stolen. The peacekeepers remained in their bunkers, hiding behind the sandbags and the fiction that they were not there to take sides. But then President Clinton did something wise and made Madeleine Albright his Secretary of State.

Albright is not the woman her predecessor was. She campaigned for a get-tough line, and, with the impetus of next year's deadline for the removal of America's 8,500 troops in Bosnia wonderfully concentrating the president's mind, she was able to swing the debate within the administration her way.

In recent months, the NATO forces in Bosnia, pushed by the U.S. and now led by the hard-line General Wesley Clark, have abandoned the passive, hunker-down policy favored by William Cohen, the defensive Defense Secretary, and they have gone on the offensive. They have pursued war criminals. They have used force to keep the peace. And, most crucially, they have—finally—taken sides.



The side they have taken is that of Biljana Plavsic, the president of the Serb Republic mini-state which takes up 49 percent of Bosnia. Plavsic is engaged in a take-no-prisoners struggle with former president and current indictee Karadzic, with Karadzic's forces controlling the eastern half of the Serbian portion of Bosnia and Plavsic's forces holding the west. The U.S. and its NATO allies are backing Plavsic in this fight, because—while Karadzic is adamantly opposed to Dayton and a unified Bosnia—Plavsic has committed herself to the key goals of Dayton, a conversion that is admittedly recent and somewhat suspect.

Under an agreement between the Clinton administration and Britain's new Blair administration, NATO is now committed to a strategy of working to surround Karadzic and his forces, to disarm paramilitary and secret police forces still loyal to Karadzic, and to seize from Karadzic the media outlets that he is using to incite violence against Plavsic and NATO. In the past few weeks, this strategy has become operational, with NATO forces training Plavsic's police forces and deploying on Plavsic's behalf.

On August 17, British and Czech troops under NATO command, acting to foil what was believed to be an imminent coup attempt against Plavsic, took a police station in Banja Luka from Karadzic loyalists and confiscated weapons sufficient for a 2,000-man army. The troops, backed by tanks, helicopter gunships and armored personnel carriers, operated under orders to fight if attacked. They turned the station and its weapons over to Plavsic's people.

This new aggressiveness is dangerous. American troops are now very close to being involved in open warfare, and there have already been casualties and setbacks. An attempt on August 28 by U.S. troops to take the police station in the town of Brcko away from Karadzic forces failed after hundreds of Karadzic loyalists armed with firebombs and clubs counterattacked, injuring two U.S. soldiers, three United Nations policemen and several civilians. Some 300 U.S. troops who seized a Karadzic-run television tower in Tuzla were subjected to twenty hours of harassment by a Serb mob, and, unfortunately, handed the tower back. More violence may be expected, and it may escalate into combat.

Taking Plavsic's side is not only risky, it is not altogether palatable. Plavsic is a charter member of the nationalist Serb movement that brought Karadzic to power. She was a staunch supporter of the campaign of ethnic cleansing, which she once called "a natural phenomena" and which to this day she will not denounce. She has publicly embraced the mad brigand called Arkan, the worst of the Serb ethnic killers, and she has said that Serbs are genetically superior to Muslims and that Sarajevo should be a divided city.

So is it worth risking American lives for her? I'm afraid so. Consider the alternative of doing nothing, of letting Karadzic and Plavsic fight it out while we hunker back down until the time comes to ship out. What this would accomplish is not peace, but war. Without NATO's help, at least half and possibly all of the Bosnian Serb Republic will remain in the hands of a corrupt regime determined not to accept the terms of Dayton. In this case, bringing war criminals to justice is not only a moral goal. It is also a practical one. Karadzic and his fellow gangsters, free and empowered, will always agitate for conflict. That is the only hand they can play; peace for them means jail, or death. Similarly, peace cannot occur in a Bosnia that is allowed to remain effectively partitioned, with displaced people denied access to their stolen homes and land. A divided Bosnia, with all its injustices intact, is inherently unstable; it will simmer and sometimes erupt, and it will require a more or less permanent peacekeeping force. Hunkering down will not ensure that we leave Bosnia next year; it will ensure that we stay there for many years. We have a chance here for a real, large and moral victory. The administration seems to grasp this. It must not lose its clarity when things get muddier and bloodier.

MICHAEL KELLY

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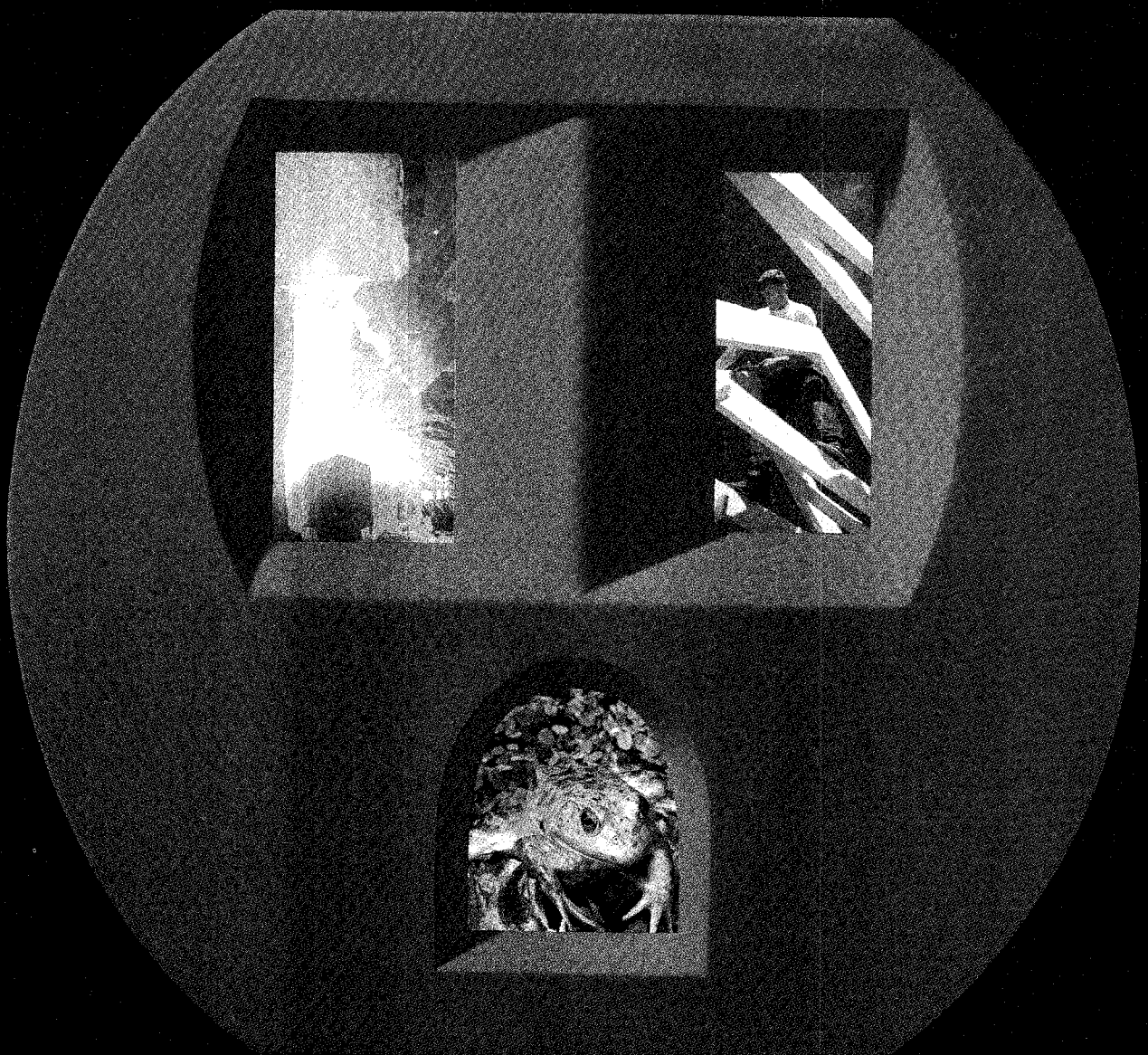

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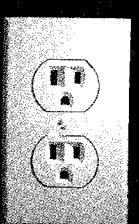

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Where We Stand

A commentary on public education and other critical issues

When a School Fails

By SANDRA FELDMAN, President
American Federation of Teachers

When the late Al Shanker started *Where We Stand* over 25 years ago, he pledged that he would freely explore and advance ideas, even if they were controversial and were not AFT policy. The new *Where We Stand*, which begins with this column, will have a different voice, but it carries the same pledge. I've spent my life in urban public schools—and there's probably nothing going on there that I haven't seen. So I'll be able to puncture some myths about how the schools work, confirm others, and raise issues that often get pushed aside. Our schools have plenty of problems; they also have many strengths. I'll be writing about both.

◆◆◆

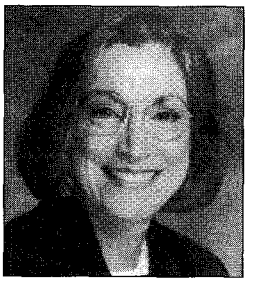
One of the most outrageous things about failing schools is that everyone—including the district administration—knows which ones they are, but often years go by and no one does anything about them. In some cases, a school's problems are obvious: There is chronic disruption and violence, poor attendance, filthy hallways, and of course, achievement that is consistently below par. But sometimes a failing school is just a dead place where everyone has given up.

What can we do about these schools? Put simply and starkly, I believe that those of us responsible for public education must never defend or try to perpetuate a school to which we would not send our own children. If a district has recognized that a school is in trouble and has given it help over a period of time and the school has not responded, we must shut that school down and start anew.

A Simplistic Response

The good news is that states and cities are taking steps to shut down failing schools. The bad news is that in most cases they do it crudely—getting rid of people instead of bad practices, putting in new people and keeping the same old programs and practices that didn't work to begin with. This strategy, which often goes by the ugly name of *reconstitution*, offers a simplistic response to a complicated problem.

There are many reasons why schools fail. Poor leadership is one of them, and a shortage of qualified teachers is another. Often administrators have settled for weak, watered-down curricula instead of adopting solid, proven programs, and they are unwilling or unable to maintain school discipline. And often there is an unconscionable lack of books and supplies—a sure sign of bad management, even when resources are scarce. But if we shut down one of these schools—and do it right—the school *can* come back.



We must not try to perpetuate schools to which we would not send our own children.

One New York City high school, for example, had incompetent principals for years. Discipline was never enforced. Violence was common. There were assaults on teachers and students, and students rioted in the halls and lunchroom. Many teachers had lost confidence in their ability to do their jobs.

How did this dysfunctional place get turned around? By starting over. Working together, parents, the teachers' union, and an enlightened superintendent were able to close the school and re-open it as four small, theme-based schools in the same building. Today, parents who had forsaken the failing school are sending their children back. There's a waiting list for students—and teachers—at the new schools. About half the original teachers stayed; others were allowed to transfer to schools elsewhere in the district.

No One Group Is To Blame

As the New York experience and similar ones elsewhere show, no one group is to blame for failing schools and no one group can achieve the necessary change. Boards of education, superintendents, the leaders of local teachers' unions, parents, and school staff have to work together on solutions. On criteria to identify failing schools. On humane and dignified processes for transferring staff if that is deemed useful or necessary. And above all, on bringing in programs and practices that have been proven to work, especially with at-risk kids.

I made this proposal in one of my first speeches as president of the AFT—to an audience of AFT members and school board members and administrators from around the country. I thought that saying we should get out front in support of shutting down failing schools was a bit risky, but my risky proposal got a standing ovation.

Good ideas can be ruined in their execution. It's essential that we shut down failing schools. It's also essential that we do it right. If we have the guts and the patience to work together, we can rebuild these schools into places where teachers can teach and kids can learn and flourish. ■

***Where We Stand* is published once every month in *The New Republic*. To comment, write to Sandra Feldman, The American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20001. For AFT news, visit our web site (http://www.aft.org).**

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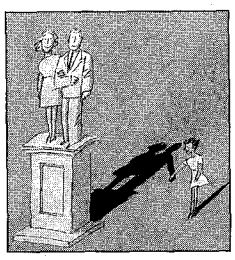

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CORRESPONDENCE

Striving for perfection

To the editors:

As STRIVE's founding executive director, and one of the principals responsible for the program's multi-city replication efforts, I'm writing in response to the article written on STRIVE by Hanna Rosin ("About Face," August 4).

I have several reactions, none of them positive. Rosin's article is, at best, condescending and, at worst, silly and mean-spirited. She takes snapshots of STRIVE's services and then broad-brushes those services with her statements. For example, her comment that STRIVE is "gruff and pitiless to the point of being abusive" assumes that the STRIVE staff works with its clientele in a one-dimensional manner. STRIVE does use a "tough love" approach, but the emphasis is on the love. Apparently Rosin's observations, and personal inclination, tend to overlook the love aspect. Additionally, the individuals served by programs like STRIVE are stronger and more resilient than she assumes. Individuals born and raised "behind the eight ball" develop veneers of emotional protection that are externalized as "attitudes." There is a part of the clients that is entirely aware of this aspect of their personalities, and if pointed out by one who obviously cares, like STRIVE instructor David Sykes, they're accepting of the criticism.

Her statement that STRIVE's secret is rejection of "sure losers" insults both STRIVE and those individuals whose personal issues do not enable them to benefit from program services at this point in their lives. These individuals can and do come back when they feel ready to take on the programmatic challenge. She implies that those who leave are too weak to handle what STRIVE dishes out, and therefore deserve nothing. Her comment that STRIVE fits the mood of the country denigrates the fact that we've been at it for over thirteen years, way before welfare reform and the Contract with America. She's right that America has become mean-spirited and has criminalized poverty, but STRIVE is not part of this attitude.

Rosin's characterization of STRIVE as an "accident of chemistry" unlikely to be repeated flies in the face of the fact that there are thirteen agencies in New York City that have successfully incorporated its philosophies and model, as well as replicated sites in Chicago, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. No replicated site is a cookie-cutter affair. STRIVE's board and staff are very well aware that each city, and, in fact, each neighborhood, has its own culture and manner of conducting business. Each city will take STRIVE's core concepts and apply them in a manner appropriate to its culture.

STRIVE is a service delivered, for the most part, by people who have walked in shoes similar to those worn by its clients. It's a service imparted by individuals with the one credential that counts—they care. Are mistakes made? Absolutely. My experience tells me, however, that if the clients believe that you believe in them, they'll suffer your mistakes and incorporate those aspects of the service that apply to them.

Finally, I take as an affront and insult her characterization of David Sykes as "violently off-kilter, yet perfectly stable." It seems she meant it as a compliment, but it falls flat. My personal relationship with David informs me that he is a sharp, caring young man who, in some respects, atones for the sins of his past—a notion that escapes most of us. This society should appreciate guys like David who are dedicated to helping those in need.

ROB CARMONA
STRIVE
New York, New York

Welfare worries

To the editors:

At last some credence has been given to the anti-welfare reform cries of the squawking liberal social workers. In Dana Milbank's article "Under the Underclass" (August 4), I was pleased to finally hear about the segment of welfare recipients who are having a difficult time securing and maintaining employment. As the director of a program that assists those who have recently been released from incarceration, I have encountered many of the "unemployable" cases. These are the individuals who are mired in drug and alcohol addiction, the mentally ill, the illiterate and the physically disabled. While this is but a small segment of those with whom I work, it is nonetheless a significant one. And it points to the paradox of welfare reform—how do we make the employable work and prevent the unemployable (and particularly their children) from suffering? The answer is by including support services in public assistance programs. The support services need not be additional lavish expenditures of public money, but could simply include referrals to community agencies. Studies have shown that at least 20 percent of AFDC recipients have substance abuse problems. Who knows how many more are mentally ill, illiterate, physically disabled or utterly afraid to work? An addict may be able to go out and find a job, but will he keep it?

ADAM VOGT
Seattle, Washington

Too little, too late

To the editors:

Alejandro Ramirez's article "Viva La Devolución" (August 4) might have made sense had it been written in early 1994, before the political assassinations of two major figures; before President Ernesto Zedillo's December 1994 devaluation of the peso, which threw Mexico into its biggest economic and political crisis in decades; before the huge corruption carried out under ex-President Carlos Salinas surfaced. As things stand today, the article is old and outdated. It replays the point of view held in 1994 by powerful businessmen whose economic interests were closely linked to the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and for whom the mere idea of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas in the presidency was a nightmare. And yet all the "economic horrors" they predicted with Cárdenas in the presidency took place under current President Zedillo.

If the American press now greets Cárdenas as a genuine democrat, it is also more than aware of his shortcomings. It's been writing about them for years. Even some Mexicans who voted for Cárdenas have no grand illusions about how well he will govern. They simply were forced to recognize that his consistent fight for democracy in the last ten years made him the more credible of the three contenders. As for Cárdenas's radical ideas, Ramirez should hear what foreign investors and analysts are now saying. I could quote several who believe Mexico's political risk dropped dramatically as a result of the election and that Cárdenas has already shown signs of moderation.

ANDREA DABROWSKI
Mexico City, Mexico

To the editors:

Alejandro Ramirez's article on Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas impressed me in only one sense: I didn't know so much mud could be slung in so small a space. We are told the "bad news" is that an "unapologetic left-winger" won the July election, with a tone that makes it clear the author believes Cárdenas would love nothing more than to recreate the Soviet Union in Mexico. Aside from the irrelevancies (who cares if vendors sell T-shirts with pictures of Che Guevara?) and the half-truths (the Institutional Revolutionary Party didn't *seem* to steal the 1988 presidential election from him,

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it *clearly* stole it), there is a more fundamental issue: in a country beset by serious economic problems, voters opted for a candidate who opposes the current mania for neoliberal economic restructuring. Whether or not Cárdenas is in a position to win the presidency in 2000, his voice will be an important counterpoint to PRI dogma.

GREG WEEKS
Carrboro, North Carolina

Limitations

To the editors:

In "Our Bodies, Our Clones" (August 4), Jean Bethke Elshtain asks, "Whatever happened to accepting embodied limits with grace?" Elshtain poses this question rhetorically, as though the desire by some women to avail themselves of advances in medical technology to bear and parent biological offspring was one more sign of civilization's decline.

The limits of infertility are no longer easy to accept because the causes of infertility are better understood and remediations more readily available. If there is a social or moral imperative for infertile women to accept this "embodied" limit "with grace," then what other embodied limits are we obliged to accept, gracefully or not, without question or attempted remediation?

In truth, we accept "embodied limits" all the time, most often without even thinking much about it. Most of us accept with a good deal of grace that we will not be NBA basketball players, celebrated entrepreneurs, Academy Award-winning thespians, honored diplomats, incisive journalists, members of Congress or even distinguished university professors. Worse yet, many individuals accept unhappiness, tragedy, disappointment, illness and the other cruelties of *fortuna* with a great deal of aplomb, calm and even resignation. Perhaps we are too willing to accept "embodied limits with grace" for our own good as sentient beings.

MARK P. PETRACCA
Irvine, California

Saluting C-SPAN

To the editors:

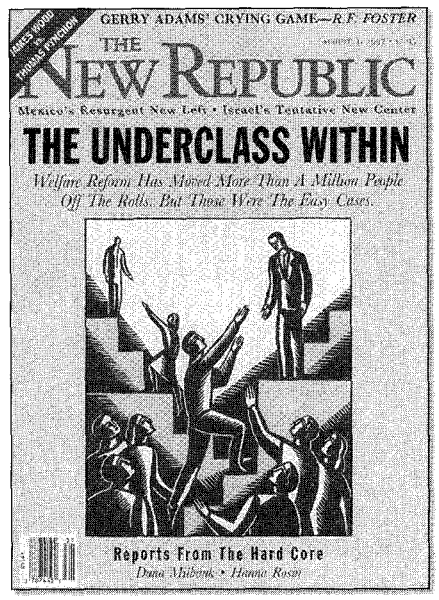
I enjoy your magazine and, in particular, Michael Kelly's TRB column. I was therefore disappointed that he took C-SPAN to task for not airing the campaign finance hearings ("What News?" August 4). I would have thought that he knew that C-SPAN has a charter to air House and Senate sessions live, and that all other programming must wait. C-SPAN has diligently aired the hearings at night after House business has concluded as well as on weekends. If not for C-SPAN, we would have no outlet for this public affairs programming as even PBS has become ratings driven and won't air the hearings as they did Watergate and Iran-Contra.

DAVID LIDSKY
New York, New York

Arrested development

To the editors:

In discussing the United Nations' reform priorities ("Security Counsel," August 11&18), the editors criticize UNCTAD, claiming that we favor statist development strategies. On behalf of UNCTAD, the United Nations Conference


GERRY ADAMS' CRYING GAME—R.F. FOSTER
THE NEW REPUBLIC
Mexico's Resurgent New Left • Israel's Tentative New Center
THE UNDERCLASS WITHIN
Welfare Reform Has Moved More Than A Million People Off The Rolls. But These Were The Easy Cases.
Reports From The Hard Core
Dana Milbank • Hanna Rosin

on Trade and Development, I would like to update your information about the thrust of our work programs.

UNCTAD's mandate today is to assist developing countries to integrate successfully into the international trading and economic systems, primarily through the promotion of trade, investment and enterprise-creation. To do so, the tools we provide are world class. Any Wall Street executive can confirm, for instance, that the *World Investment Report* produced by UNCTAD is the definitive annual publication in its field.

Far from promoting outdated, state-led development models, UNCTAD is today fully cognizant of the central role of markets. It is also committed to strengthening the role of private enterprise as the main engine of development.

We have already completed a far-reaching program of organizational reform, ahead of the rest of the United Nations system. Nine divisions have been merged into four, reducing bureaucratic and administrative support structures; the number of intergovernmental meeting days has been slashed by half; and, by January 1998, our payroll will have been cut by 13 percent compared with two years earlier—double the U.N. average.

Alongside our other 187 member states, last year the United States took an active part in the UNCTAD reform process. Its outcome subsequently prompted Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on several occasions to describe UNCTAD as "a model of U.N. reform." The same expression was used by the G-7 countries in their Lyon Summit communiqué in June 1996.

Our organization has changed dramatically since the 1970s and today delivers a wide range of useful services to developing countries and former socialist countries at a modest cost (4.3 percent of the U.N. budget). I invite THE NEW REPUBLIC to take a close look at how UNCTAD is honestly trying to meet the expectations of the international community, in particular developing countries. I feel confident that an objective examination of our reforms and current output will change perceptions founded much more on past controversies than present-day reality.

RUBENS RICUPERO
Secretary-General of UNCTAD
Geneva, Switzerland

The end of the beginning

To the editors:

It is distressing to read the assertion in Istvan Deak's review of *Nazi Germany and the Jews Volume I*, by Saul Friedländer, that "Jewish culture flourished under the Nazis" ("The Beginning of the End," August 11&18). To be sure, the German Jews did all they could to sustain themselves culturally, boost morale and give Jewish musicians, artists and writers ongoing opportunities to exercise their talents and earn a livelihood. It was a resilient and often noble response in the face of ever-worsening repression and hostility. But it was a shadow existence carried out under the gun. We honor its memory, but, please, let's not romanticize it.

STEPHEN LEHMANN
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Letters should include the writer's full name, address and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letters may be edited for space. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

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Fertility, sex, birth control, family size, and the third rail of politics

Warning: This ad is not politically correct

Let's get right to the point

We believe that the single most important issue facing the United States' future is deciding how many people we want to be.

All other issues – the economy, the environment, civil liberties, size of government, public health, national security, social harmony – all are shaped by the size of our nation's population.

Overcrowding by default

If we fail to act, we guarantee a huge population increase. At current rates of fertility and immigration, the U.S. population will rise by 50% by 2050 and pass *half a billion* in the coming century.

Taboo subjects

Full and useful discussion of any population issue is difficult. For example, a few magazines have refused to run ads like this one.

Some people are reluctant to talk about immigration. To express concern that over a million legal and illegal immigrants settle in the U.S. each year is to risk being labeled a racist. Other people are uncomfortable discussing fertility, sex or birth control.

Some people see the connection between population and the environment, but are overwhelmed by a problem they think is too large to deal with – so they choose to ignore it. How about you?

Do you really want a country with twice as many people?

The third rail

Our leaders are silent about population because it's the third rail of politics – touch it, you're politically dead! It'll take extraordinary courage for them to discuss the numbers so vital to our future.

We call 'em as we see 'em

Our descendants will be condemned to a crowded, impoverished and polluted land unless we act now. We should quit worrying about offending with the truth.

150 million

NPG believes that a U.S. population of 150 million (what it was in 1950) would be sustainable in the long run.

We can make the *gradual transition* to that level by doing two things now:

Two and 100,000

Encourage parents to have no more than two children. Restrict legal immigration to 100,000 per year and enforce existing laws requiring removal of illegal immigrants.

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Negative Population Growth, Inc.
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Washington, DC 20009
Voice: (202) 667-8950
E-mail: npg@npg.org
Visit our site at: www.npg.org

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NR-103

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

SEPTEMBER 22, 1997

WHITEWASH

A few weeks ago, in the depths of August, the Clinton administration unveiled the centerpiece of its plan to mend, not end, affirmative action. The Small Business Administration proposes to change the name and to expand the scope of the grandmother of all affirmative action programs, involving set-asides for "socially and economically disadvantaged" federal contractors. The proposed changes would make it easier for white-owned companies to qualify for set-asides—and administration officials predict that the main beneficiaries will be white women. In fact, the decision to broaden rather than narrow the scope of federal set-asides is a serious mistake. And it provides a worrisome harbinger of the administration's position in the affirmative action battles to come.

The administration's proposed changes are contained in section 124.103 of the Small Business Administration's regulations, titled "Who is socially disadvantaged?" Ever since 1987, there has been a "rebuttable presumption that the following individuals are socially disadvantaged: Black Americans; Hispanic Americans; Native Americans...; Asian Pacific Americans...; [and] Subcontinent Asian Americans." Now come the proposed changes, which assert:

> An individual who is not a member of one of the groups presumed to be socially disadvantaged ... must establish individual social disadvantage.... Evidence of individual social disadvantage must include the following elements:
>
> (i) At least one objective distinguishing feature that has contributed to social disadvantage, such as race, ethnic origin, gender, physical handicap, long-term residence in an environment isolated from the mainstream of American society, or other similar causes not common to individuals who are not socially disadvantaged;
>
> (ii) Personal experiences of social disadvantage.... The experiences must have been in American society, not in other countries, and must have been substantial, chronic, and longstanding; [and]
>
> (iii) Negative impact on entry into or advancement in the business world because of the disadvantage.... In every case ... SBA will consider education, employment and business history to see if the totality of circumstances shows disadvantage in entering into or advancing in the business world.

This is the reductio ad absurdum of victimhood politics. There can't be more than a handful of entrepreneurs in America who don't qualify as socially disadvantaged under the new standards: in July, a federal district judge in Denver ruled that even white men who have been denied government contracts as a result of affirmative action were socially disadvantaged, because they, too, had suffered from unjustifiable discrimination. In practice, this is a windfall for white women, who often operate as fronts for businesses controlled by white men. Between 1987 and 1996, the percentage of dollars earned by women in a Department of Transportation set-aside program doubled, from 20.4 percent to 41.4 percent. It's hard to think of a less justifiable vision of affirmative action than taking away contracts earmarked for African Americans and giving them to companies nominally owned by upper-middle-class white women earning up to $250,000 a year.

But the most serious objections to the administration's proposal are not pragmatic objections. They are moral and historical. State legislatures first introduced the euphemism of set-asides based on "social disadvantage" after the Supreme Court, in 1989, said that racial set-asides could only be justified if there was persuasive evidence that each racial and ethnic group on the official list had suffered tangible evidence of discrimination. In the past decade, the state-by-state effort to produce empirical evidence of "social disadvantage" has dramatically failed; recent immigrants and women, it turns out, have not been integrated into the small business economy long enough to have suffered the kind of discrimination the Supreme Court now requires. But the administration proposes to compound the analytical error. Relevant evidence of "social disadvantage," according to the new proposals, will include "social patterns or pressures which have channeled the individual into nonprofessional or non-business fields." But the Supreme Court has said in other contexts that generalized evidence of "social discrimination" isn't enough to justify compensation by the federal government.

As the courts are becoming increasingly skeptical of racial and gender preferences, universities and federal and state agencies are trying to save affirmative action by changing its packaging and expanding its scope. But preferences based on "social disadvantage" are even less defensible than preferences for African Americans alone. By converting grievances into entitlements, the administration would make a doomed program even worse. •

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NOTEBOOK

DREAM ON: "If you're a United States Senator, unless you're under indictment or in detox, you're considered a candidate for president when you come into [New Hampshire]," recently quipped John McCain, who is considering a bid himself. But until last week, when Bob Smith said he was "looking at" running, we never took the joke literally. A two-term senator, Smith is known, if at all, for waving a plastic fetus on the Senate floor during abortion debates and for opposing Newt Gingrich's plan to bring elephants to the Capitol. His chief asset, his boosters say, is that he's from New Hampshire, the site of the first GOP primary. But in the 1996 election, Smith won by just a few points—this, in one of the nation's most conservative states. No matter. In a climate where Newt "18 percent in the polls" Gingrich fancies himself an attractive prospect, who *isn't* fit to be a presidential contender? Coming soon: the Farrakhan-Wanniski ticket.

LABOR OF LOVE: In the wake of labor's p.r. victory in the UPS strike, Republicans and businesses are making their own play for the hearts of working America—by making union violence the issue. This week Utah Senator Orrin Hatch is holding hearings on a bill to overrule a 1973 Supreme Court decision exempting unions from a federal extortion law if their acts were "used to gain legitimate union objectives." To support the bill, the National Right to Work Committee, an anti-union group, has touted a study that estimates 63,000 incidents of union violence occurred since 1975. We know that labor violence occurs, but the bill is still dubious. That 63,000 figure relies on ingenious arithmetic: the study counts up acts of violence recorded in newspapers (shoving included), then multiplies by seven (figuring for every act reported there must be six others that weren't, an assumption derived from another questionable study). But the real deception is the claim that union members who commit violence can escape the arm of the law. They can't—the exception that protects union leaders from federal extortion charges is a limited one, and there is a reason for it. Union-busting companies once argued that strikes constituted a form of mass force prosecutable as extortion. Without that exception, a union's president could personally face criminal charges simply because an individual union member, acting on his own, committed violence. We deplore mob violence, by union members or anyone else. But we also deplore dishonest ploys by opportunistic senators.

ALGERIA'S HISS: Let it be noted that Craig R. Whitney's recent story in *The New York Times* on the massacre in Rais, Algeria, was datelined Paris. In fact, there is no American reporter—or reporter from an American publication—based in Algeria at all. Yet while sketchy wire copy is the only source of information for U.S. readers, the facts are stark enough. There is a war between Islamic extremists bent on imposing the Koran on society and the military intent on retaining its hold on government that has left tens of thousands dead—very few of them casualties of conventional military encounters. Most of the fatalities are from the campaign of terror by Muslim fanatics deploying bombs in marketplaces and slashing civilian throats and eviscerating their genitals. (This last surgery is usually reserved for women.) The others are victims of an official campaign of counter-terror by soldiers—a campaign that usually provokes as much terror as it counters. The average schoolteacher opts for the rule of the government soldier as the lesser of evils, but don't mistake that for legitimacy. The government has cordoned off Algeria's vast oil and gas holdings in the Sahara, which should benefit the citizenry but instead finance the army and its leaders. When petroleum prices were high and social advance was really an option, the statists in control were not interested. Whether these tyrants will triumph over the terrorists of the faith is unclear, but it is clear that the blood will continue to flow. The numbers boggle the mind: eighteen one day; fifty-six the next; in Rais the count has climbed from ninety-eight to more than 300. Pity any people trapped between a government they disdain and a movement they fear, but pity especially the Algerians. No one cares about their ordeal. Not their Arab cousins. Not the United Nations. And certainly not the American press.

LIABILITY LAW: Having been triangulated almost to extinction by President Clinton, GOP leaders are busy scavenging for a new wedge issue. One desperate proposal is "auto choice," in which drivers could lower their insurance premiums by agreeing, at the time of purchasing coverage, to forfeit the right of suing for "pain and suffering" after an accident. It doesn't exactly distill into a sultry soundbite, but Kentucky Senator Mitch McConnell and House Majority Leader Dick Armey are each sponsoring auto choice bills, and Steve Forbes has been plugging it on the radio. McConnell even labeled it one of the three main GOP "themes" for the next Congress, reports Paul Gigot in *The Wall Street Journal*. "Mark this as the sleeper issue of 1998," Gigot trumpets. Whatever the idea's substantive merits, it is no political nirvana. In 1996, Californians voted two-to-one against a state initiative promoting this approach. And when New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman proposed an auto choice bill this year, it was so unpopular that the legislative leaders of her own party rejected it. Guess this is one Republican initiative the Democrats won't be stealing.

HOME NEWS: We are happy to announce the appearance of two new books by TNR contributors: *Required Reading: Why Our American Classics Matter Now* by Andrew Delbanco (Farrar, Straus and Giroux) and *Minds and Bodies: Philosophers and Their Ideas* by Colin McGinn (Oxford University Press). •

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ROMANCE AND PASSION. The great love stories spurred Tchaikovsky to write his most romantic orchestral works: the lovely *Romeo and Juliet*...regarded as his first masterpiece...and *Francesca da Rimini*, in which he unleashes the full power of the symphony orchestra in a display of color and passion. His first *Piano Concerto* was an arduous labor of love; his *Violin Concerto* was created in a burst of passion.

PATRIOTISM AND FATE. As a rousing patriotic celebration, the *1812 Overture* needs no introduction. Although it borrows its theme from Serbian folk tunes, the *Marche slave* includes a brash, impassioned statement of the Russian national anthem. Yet during the final decades of his life, Tchaikovsky was haunted by the spectre of Fate, convinced he was destined for inevitable defeat. Thus, in the *Fourth Symphony*, Fate is a violent and destructive assailant. His *Sixth Sympony*–the *Pathetique*–ends in a mood of total despair. And though Tchaikovsky considered it his finest work, it was his last. He died six days after its premiere.

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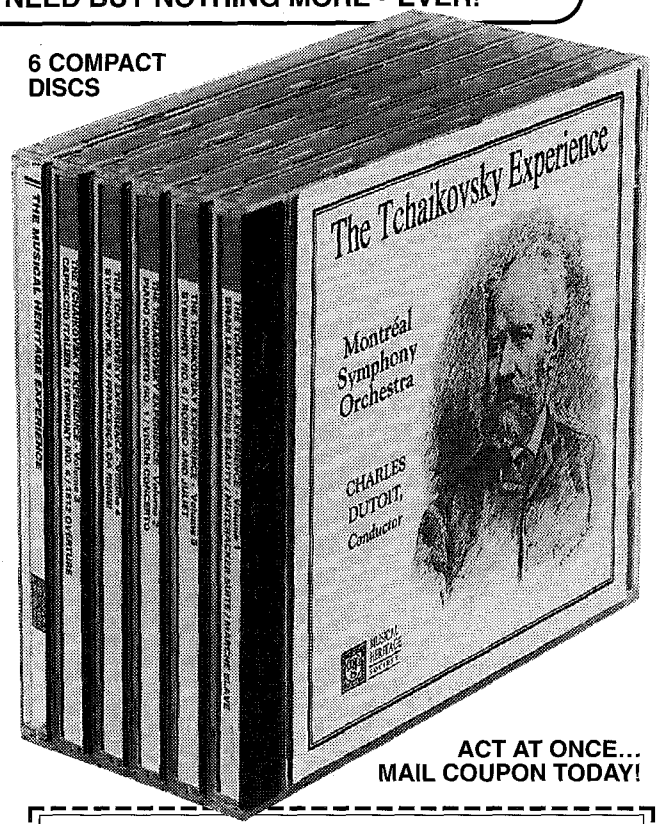

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MEDIA REX

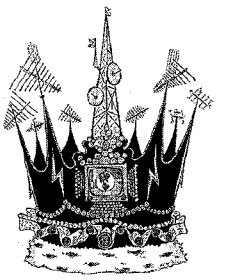
THE FEAST OF DIANA

By William Powers

> Somebody—was it Burke?—called journalism the fourth estate. That was true at the time, no doubt. But at the present moment it really is the only estate. It has eaten up the other three.
> —Oscar Wilde

"I always believed the press would kill her in the end," said Earl Spencer, the brother of Princess Diana and former London correspondent for NBC's "Today" show. So true, so true, said Johnnie Cochran, who knows all about killing and the press: "I think the Earl of Spencer [sic] isn't too far off, despite his grief, that they've gone too far, not only in Europe and this country, and I think we have to do something about it."

Live from Southampton, New York, Barbara Walters materialized on the screen: "Without being presumptuous, I guess it's safe to say that we were friends. I visited her several times in her apartment in Kensington Palace. I saw her when she was in Washington and then in New York the last time when she was here for the auction of her dresses. I never have talked about her and probably never would have, and that was one of the reasons we were friends, because I kept our meetings to myself." Quite right, I thought, to honor her memory by respecting the shreds of her privacy. Then Sam Donaldson interrupted: "Barbara and Diane Sawyer will have more on this tragedy in a one-hour special they'll be anchoring tonight at 8 p.m. Eastern time."



In fact it was two hours, and they did not have much more on the tragedy—but they did have the royal Christmas cards Walters had received. And the next day, on "Good Morning America," Walters staked a new claim, reading a letter from Diana hinting that Walters would have gotten the big interview—if only the princess had lived. ("Now that's an interview, obviously, that will never take place," Walters said.)

Tom Cruise phoned CNN and located his Diana-identity: "I've actually been in that same tunnel being chased by paparazzi," he said. There but for the grace of God goes Jerry Maguire. Major James Hewitt, who made love to Diana and then peddled his tale of her flesh in a book, told reporters that he "loved and admired" her, which led Charles Sabine of NBC News to note that, in Britain, Hewitt is known as Major Rat and can hardly step out in public without people "hurling insults" at him. Sabine scored Hewitt for "making money out of a time when she really was extremely unhappy, unlike the condition that she was in shortly before her death, when she was a great deal happier."

An essential distinction, that—the moneymaking must occur at the proper time. But then essential distinctions were the order of the day. The tabloid television shows ran appalled reports on the terrible "stalkerazzi," who sell their wares to the tabloid television shows, though this fact was omitted on the two reports I caught. Steve Coz, editor of *The National Enquirer* and himself a master of distinctions, said his paper had "tried as best we could to distance ourselves and not buy their photos." I tried as best I could to believe Coz.

Katharine Graham, who publishes *The Washington Post* and *Newsweek*, announced that the paparazzi are not, in fact, members of the press. Informed of Mrs. Graham's remark, a paparazzo on another show pointed out that a perusal of *Newsweek*'s pages would surely turn up fine examples of his profession's handiwork.

Time magazine's "special report" arrived on my desk, and I couldn't help admiring its tastefully simple title: "Diana, Princess of Wales 1961-1997." She herself had been tastefully simple, and now, in these pages, she was simply tasty. Inside, *Time* offered an uncredited "last photo" of the princess, "entering the Mercedes that would bring her to her death"; and another of Dodi just "moments later," with a caption noting "the two had known each other for years but had grown publicly closer only recently, leading to the frenzied interest of tabloid journalists everywhere." I was joining *Time* in a snort of disgust at those frenzied tabloiders when I wondered exactly who had taken these photographs of Diana and Dodi. (*Time* told me that none of the photos in the issue came from the notorious seven, but couldn't say exactly who shot them. Oddly, Big Pictures, the agency that sold the photos to *Time*, asked that its name not appear next to the pictures. An agency spokesman, who refused to identify himself, said that the photographer also asked not to be identified.)

I turned for moral relief to page forty-six, where Margaret Carlson delivered a properly scolding essay on the sort of wretches—"the carrion birds of fame," as *Time* called them—who take such photographs. Carlson said "the public must avert its eyes" from their work, so I hastily closed the magazine—but not so fast that I didn't glimpse, on page forty-seven, a telephoto shot of Di and Dodi on a yacht last month.

On Tuesday, "Larry King Live" featured Fran "The Nanny" Drescher and Whoopi Goldberg debating tabloid journalism with two British newspaper editors; Joan Lunden and Tom Selleck followed with more. Then came a call from Patsy Ramsey, mother of JonBenet. Mrs. Ramsey established that she was even closer to Diana than Joan and Tom and Fran and Whoopi because JonBenet was a sweet princess exploited by the tabs, just like Diana—they were sisters of a sort: "America's people's princess and the beautiful people's princess of Great Britain."

I suddenly didn't feel hungry anymore. •

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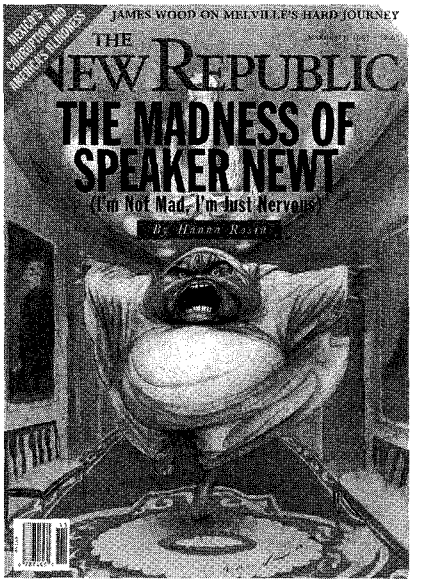

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D.C.'s school fiasco.

CLASS STRUGGLE

By Sydney Freedberg Jr.

By 1996, the District of Columbia's public schools faced a novel problem: undercrowding. So many people had fled the mismanaged and crime-ridden capital that just 80,000 children were enrolled in a system designed to accommodate 150,000. Maintaining the excess space had become ludicrously expensive, but—like the rest of the city government—the Board of Education could never bring itself to take action. Closing facilities would have meant offending parents or inflaming the city's chronic racial tensions—and that was too controversial for the democratically elected board to handle.

That's when the Control Board stepped in. Appointed by Congress in 1995 to purge incompetence and corruption from the District's government, the Control Board seized authority over the schools, then turned the system over to a new group of trustees who would report to no one except the Board itself. Parents were optimistic at first—and why not? Since the trustees were not directly elected, they would be able to base their decisions about school closings strictly on the quality of education each school offered. Where elected officials had failed, appointed ones would surely succeed.

If that line of argument sounds familiar, it's because federal officials invoked it again only last month, when they decided to give the Control Board authority over all other city functions as well. That move was widely hailed, and for good reason. But what happened in Washington when the appointed Board tried to do what elected officials could not—when it tried to decide which schools should be closed—is a warning to those who hope that simple fixes can cut dysfunctional cities free from the zero-sum politics of race and class.

The Board's problems began with its trustees' initial criteria for targeting schools: by their own admission, they never even considered academic quality, focusing instead on the issue of quality in the schools' physical plants. The trustees then decided it would be less disruptive to shut down small schools than big ones: thus, they singled out only four of the District's mammoth and dreadful secondary schools, while targeting twelve of the smaller elementary schools. But in Washington the elementary schools, at least some of them, are the schools that actually work. The trustees also argued that it was better to shut down schools with many students who commuted across the city than to shut down neighborhood schools. And that decision meant closing the schools that worked best, the schools whose commitment to quality had attracted children from across the city through D.C.'s school choice program.

One of those slated for closing was Hearst Elementary, a popular and racially integrated de facto magnet school that soon became the lightning rod for parent protests. "It is a school that became integrated ... voluntarily," Hearst PTA President Susan Wedlan pointed out. "To destroy that by shutting the school down is really taking a step back in time." What's more, the plan would have transferred Hearst's in-boundary children to other Ward 3 schools, displacing *their* out-of-boundary kids to make room—in effect, setting off a chain reaction of resegregation.

Why was Hearst picked for the axe? Ironically, the likely reason was race. A local nonprofit called The 21st Century Fund concludes that political objectives—spreading the closings equally by ward—were the only possible explanation for such a seemingly illogical plan. The Fund argues—and Judith Jones, a consultant who resigned in frustration from the closings plan office, confirms—that Hearst was only being closed because it was in Ward 3, a majority-white district and one of the city's wealthiest areas. Sums up Don Reeves, himself black, who represents Ward 3 on the Board of Education and also serves as a dissident trustee: "This is purely [a] racial argument, that because other wards are losing schools, a white, affluent ward should not be exempt."

So was Hearst closed, a victim of race politics? No: in the end, it *was* exempt—but only because of class politics. Activist parents formed a group called Parents and Community for Education. Although PACE claimed to represent a broad swath of D.C. parents—and although it had about as many black members as white—its leaders were disproportionately middle- and upper-class parents who sent their children to the good schools in Ward 3.

Remember, the trustees report to the Control Board, which in turn reports to Congress. And while the District does not have a voting member in Congress, middle- and upper-class Washingtonians have myriad means of informal influence. After PACE demonstrated at a Senate subcommittee hearing on the schools, the chairman of the committee, Kansas Republican Sam Brownback, and the ranking minority member, Connecticut Democrat Joe Lieberman, sent their first official, written communication to the trustees—questioning the closings list. Lieberman admits there is only one school whose name he can actually recall offhand: Hearst. He also recalls "quite an eloquent statement" in *The Washington Post* by a parent whose child's school was targeted. The *Post* only ran one such piece—a prominently placed editorial by Hearst parent Lisa Greenman. Phil Blair, a PACE leader, acknowledges that "the schools that stayed open were the politically well-connected schools. [And] the political connection is not in the city: it's people who have the ability to go to Congress."

The standard prescription for such cynical political manipulation is to take the problem out of the hands of the politicians and hand it over to someone above the sordid fray. Oh, but we did that already. •

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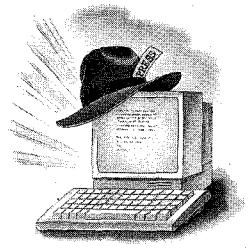
PARRAL DISPATCH

LOST COLONY

By Joshua Hammer

Juana Sepúlveda sits stiffly in her dirt-floor shack in the backwoods of central Chile, trying to conceal her fear. "They're coming again," she whispers. Outside, headlight beams illuminate the hovel's spartan interior: two rusty bicycles, mattresses for her and her three children, a stove and a few wooden tables. Sepúlveda holds her breath for a moment, then exhales with relief as the car passes. "I can hardly sleep anymore."

Sepúlveda may have reason for her insomnia. The 38-year-old farm laborer has become a pivotal, if unlikely, player in a melodrama that has riveted Chile for months. The figure at the center is Paul Schäfer, a 76-year-old German pastor and close ally of Chile's former dictator Augusto Pinochet. Schäfer is also the founder of Colonia Dignidad, a secretive enclave of German immigrants that put down roots in this remote Andean valley thirty-six years ago—and has been surrounded by rumors of sinister doings ever since. Human rights groups and a handful of escapees claim the community is really a den of horrors: a torture center for the junta that ran Chile in the 1970s and 1980s, a sometime sanctuary for Nazi war criminals and a child-molesting cult. Colony spokesmen have denied all the charges, and colony adherents have responded to them with violence. Just a few months ago, Gero Gemballa, a German journalist who wrote the definitive book about Schäfer, *Colonia Dignidad*, was beaten up by two Chilean thugs—thugs the state police later arrested and identified as Schäfer loyalists.



Despite such incidents, members of the Chilean government have long resisted any formal investigation of the group. In 1991, for example, conservative congressmen blocked an attempt by Chile's then-President Patricio Aylwin to shut down the colony. Aylwin moved against the colony because of a disputed 1977 Amnesty International report that documented torture of leftist prisoners within the enclave and because of testimony from three colonists who escaped in the mid-1980s.

But now the colony's days may be numbered. During the past several months, Chilean police have been attempting to arrest Schäfer after a half dozen Chilean mothers and their children—including Sepúlveda and her 9-year-old son, Eduardo—came forward with horrifying tales of kidnapping and child rape. Police investigators now say Schäfer is hiding in a fortified bunker somewhere beneath the 35,000-acre settlement—guarded by a paramilitary force equipped with weapons provided by the Chilean army during the 1980s. For months, Chileans have been glued to the spectacle on television: probes by grim-faced detectives; weeping blond-haired, blue-eyed German colonists who insist Schäfer is innocent; angry loyalists from neighboring communities, hurling obscenities and rocks at journalists. In late July, two more young people—both alleged abuse victims—escaped from the colony; a few weeks later the pastor's heir apparent and camp physician, Harmut Hopp, was arrested and charged by the state police with covering up Schäfer's alleged sexual abuse. Nobody knows how long the siege will last—or if Schäfer will ultimately resort to violent resistance rather than surrender. "This could be our Waco," said local Congressman Guillermo Ceroni.

When I arrived in Chile last June, Colonia Dignidad was under siege. I drove out to the colony at dawn one cold, rainy morning, following a rough dirt road from the country town of Parral, 200 miles south of Santiago. It was easy to appreciate what had drawn Schäfer and his followers to this spot. The road wound for twenty miles through a nearly unpopulated rural landscape of sugar beet fields, mounted cowboys and a few decrepit farm houses. But the Andes no longer offer seclusion. A new police checkpoint prevents Schäfer from escaping by road, and a crowd of reporters and cameramen were holding a vigil outside the front gate, waiting for the next invasion by the police.

I walked up to the gate and asked a Chilean guard to contact a colony spokesman. The security man radioed the colony's headquarters from a small white guardhouse and reappeared two minutes later. "They have nothing to say, except that this is a dirty persecution," he said.

It was another "dirty persecution" that drew Schäfer to Chile in the first place. Born in 1921 in Siegburg, Schäfer lost his eye in a childhood accident, served in Germany's wartime army as a hospital orderly, then became an evangelical preacher, attracting scores of traumatized war refugees—as well as some ex-Nazi officers. In 1961, a warrant was issued for Schäfer's arrest on charges of sexual abuse in Siegburg after two church members' sons accused him of molesting them. He fled to Chile with about 300 sect members, narrowly avoiding arrest. "Schäfer said 'a Third World War is coming, worse than the Second, and it's better we leave Germany,'" Heinz Kuhn, a 74-year-old former sect member, told me. "We didn't know anything about the charges against him." Schäfer sealed off his settlement with electrified fences and armed guards, and transformed the land into a self-sufficient colony—with factories, farms, even an airstrip.

Over the past thirty-six years, almost nobody has been allowed in or out of Colonia Dignidad. The only details of life inside come from Kuhn, who fled in 1968, and a handful of escapees. The accounts they tell have been remarkably consistent. If true, they paint a frightening portrait of a sexual predator who rules through physical

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and psychological abuse. "Schäfer is God. He knows everything. The colonists call him 'Permanent Uncle' or the 'Professor,'" says Kuhn, who now lives in central Chile with round-the-clock police protection. Escapees say sect members work fourteen hours a day under guard, must confess their "dirty thoughts" to Schäfer and are forbidden to have sex; the punishment for disobedience includes beatings and electroshock.

Yet, as with everything surrounding the colony, it is hard to know precisely what is true and what is rumor. For example, despite the alleged prohibition on sex, birth certificates filed in Parral show that there were in fact fifty-five births inside the colony since 1961. What does seem clear is that Schäfer has had powerful allies outside the colony's gates. A passionate anti-communist, Schäfer welcomed the bloody 1973 coup against President Salvador Allende, and in Colonia Dignidad's guest quarters a framed photo shows Schäfer's aides warmly greeting Pinochet. Diplomats at the German Embassy in Santiago for years praised Schäfer's "model colony" and, at least according to Gemballa's book, even brought back several escapees who tried to take refuge at the embassy. Another close ally was Pinochet's former intelligence chief, General Manuel Contreras, convicted of plotting the assassination of Orlando Letelier (the Chilean foreign minister who was killed by a car bomb in Washington, D.C., in 1976). Amnesty International alleges that Schäfer turned over his colony to Contreras and his feared secret police, known as the DINA, for the torture and murder of leftist prisoners. Schäfer sued for libel. The case is yet to be resolved. But in testimony before a government commission, survivors claimed they were blindfolded, driven through the gates of a compound they believed was Colonia Dignidad, and tortured with electroshocks as Mozart and Wagner played in the background.

But Schäfer's apparent sense of impunity may yet prove his undoing. Hernán Fernandez, the defense lawyer representing at least seven alleged victims, says that, in June 1996, a 9-year-old Chilean boy inside the colony smuggled out a note to his mother that described in lurid detail how he'd been brought to Schäfer's bedroom by the pastor's teenage bodyguards, then raped and warned to keep quiet. Between November and March, other boys, including Juana Sepúlveda's son, came forward with similar tales of abuse. While police investigators say privately there were signs of molestation, there has been no evidence made public to support these charges. And allegations from children in sexual abuse cases often prove unreliable.

In terms of public opinion, however, Schäfer has clearly come out the loser. By this spring, most of the region's population appeared to have turned against him. And the pastor's right-wing backers, weakened after seven years of democratic rule in Chile, have begun urging him to surrender. Still, Sepúlveda and other witnesses remain scared. Stroking her son's hair, she says, "How can I feel protected after Schäfer was allowed to do what he did for so long?"

JOSHUA HAMMER is *Newsweek*'s South America correspondent.

Thompson blew it.

BULL IN A CHINA SCANDAL

By John B. Judis

The second round of Senator Fred Thompson's campaign fund-raising hearings, now underway, will focus on demonstrating that the White House broke or bent campaign laws in raising money for the 1996 election. The committee will spend several weeks probing whether the famous White House coffees were "fund-raisers" or merely "fund-raising dates," and whether Vice President Al Gore believed he was seeking money or mere friendship at the Hsi Lai Temple near Los Angeles in April 1996. These are not trivial matters, but they are not grand either; they represent the kind of petty and venal corruption that has periodically plagued American politics since the Grant administration. To anyone who has followed the scandal that surfaced in October 1996, when John Huang burst onto the front pages, the committee's new agenda suggests that the hearings are, in essence, over. The real investigation, for which Thompson recruited sixty staffers, ended when the chairman gaveled down the first month of testimony on July 31. Having opened the hearings with a declaration to get his hands around the dark conspiracy that seemed to lay at the center of the scandal, Thompson saw it slip irretrievably through his fingers.

When the hearings began on July 8, Thompson, who chairs the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, had planned to devote his opening remarks to platitudes

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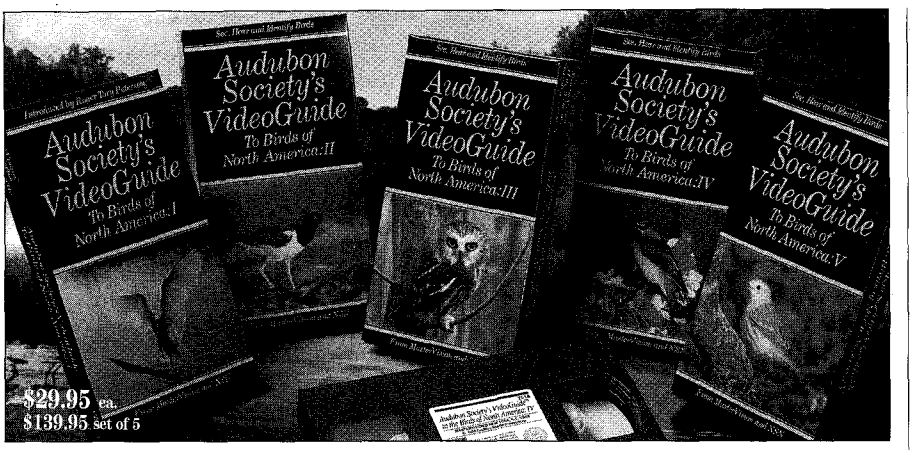
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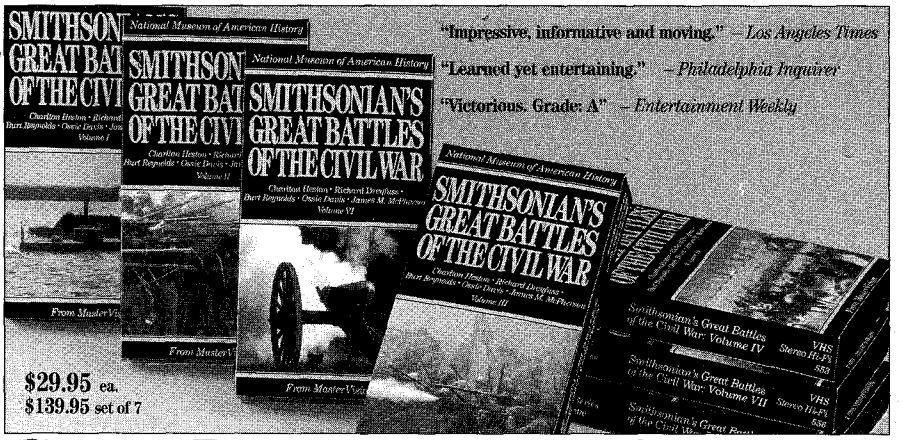
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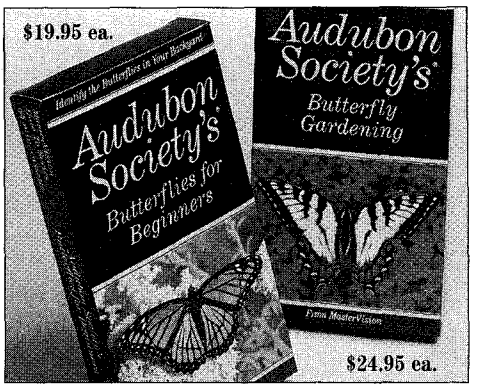

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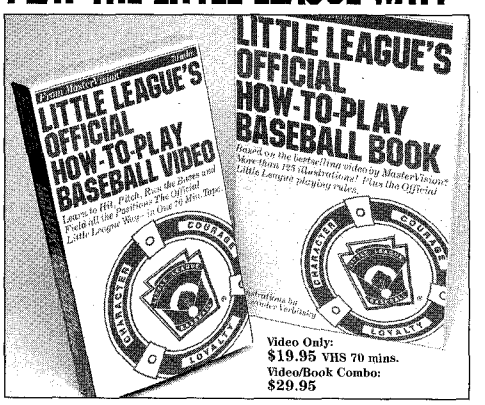

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about fixing the system. But at the last moment—perhaps in response to news that Senator John Glenn, the ranking minority member, would announce that Huang was willing to testify under a grant of "limited immunity"—Thompson decided to preface his remarks with a startling claim. He said that the committee had "uncovered a significant amount of documentary and other relevant information" about "a plan hatched during the last election cycle by the Chinese government and designed to pour illegal money into American political campaigns." The committee, Thompson vowed, would show "who in the White House should have known—or actually knew—of the Chinese plan and how it had come to be implemented."

Thompson's bold statement nicely overshadowed Glenn's announcement, because it promised to address the dramatic question of whether foreign money had corruptly influenced U.S. policy—a question that the revelations about Huang had awakened. But the ploy would prove a disastrous blunder: it set up expectations about the hearings that Thompson and his committee would never meet. A week into the hearings, Thompson was already backpedaling furiously, assuring two witnesses: "The reason that we're asking you gentlemen these questions is not because we're trying to prove some elaborate theory that someone else has concocted about spies." After the hearings concluded, Thompson conceded at an August 1 breakfast meeting with reporters that "we do not know to what extent" China itself tried to influence the elections through illegal contributions. He added, lamely, that there was "some confusion in terms of what was said and what was intended" by his opening statement about China.

And that wasn't all. Not only did Thompson fail to prove a Chinese government connection, but he couldn't effectively make the lesser, easier case that there was a covert attempt by Asian businesses and businessmen to shape American policy and elections—and that the White House had indirectly encouraged this attempt through its aggressive, ask-no-questions fund-raising. This was a remarkable failure on Thompson's part. Well before the hearings, reporters, committee staff and congressmen conversant with the scandal had concluded on the basis of considerable evidence that Huang had been engaged in economic espionage for the Lippo Group and that former Little Rock restaurateur Yah Lin "Charlie" Trie had been the agent of a Chinese businessman closely tied to, if not part of, the government of China. In June, House Rules Chairman Gerald Solomon had asserted publicly what committee staffs were saying privately—that intelligence intercepts of Huang's phone calls while at the Commerce Department revealed that he had "committed economic espionage and breached our national security." It also had been established that the White House had hired Huang on the basis of a recommendation from Lippo and had welcomed Trie's involvement in fund-raising.

By the hearings' end, however, Thompson was backing away from even these charges, claiming on July 30 merely that the "evidence would indicate that Mr. Trie contributed or caused to be contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars of illegal political contributions to the DNC and other political campaigns." In the aftermath, committee staff described an investigation that scarcely seemed worth the bother. When I asked committee spokesman Paul Clark what the hearings had uncovered, he framed the findings in the most general and innocuous terms: "The point we were trying to make is that the last campaign was broadly influenced by the influx of money and that some of that illegal money came from overseas." When I asked Clark if there was going to be further inquiry into the question of Huang, Trie and the Chinese connection, he said, "I don't think there is going to be any new focus on China," and he laid out the committee's plan to explore White House coffees and the Buddhist temple fund-raiser.

Will it be enough for the hearings to expose these kinds of activities? It's worth doing, but that's not really why the Senate voted to spend $4.3 million for these hearings. While Republicans wanted to skewer the Clinton White House and Democrats wanted to spotlight Republican soft money, senators of both parties were echoing the public's concern over whether foreign governments and businesses had taken advantage of the White House's thirst for election dollars to gather economic intelligence and even influence policy. Thompson and the committee completely botched that part of the inquiry. Now they have abandoned it.

Privately, committee staff and aides acknowledge that they blew it. Publicly, Republican senators on the committee still continue to blame their failure on White House stonewalling, the absence of key witnesses and the difficulty of proving foreign subversion. These were all factors, but only factors. The White House did withhold crucial documents. Boxes of files that Thompson had requested from the Democratic National Committee arrived after the first key witness, former Finance Director Richard Sullivan, had already testified. (DNC Chairman Roy Romer reported that 4,000 pages of Sullivan's notes sprang rabbit-like from a file cabinet thought to have already been searched.) But, all things considered, the Clinton administration cooperated with Thompson's committee far more than Nixon's administration cooperated with the Watergate inquiry or Reagan's with the Iran-Contra investigation. Indeed, part of Thompson's problem was that, by releasing some documents earlier rather than later, the Clinton administration eliminated the possibility that the committee itself would make embarrassing revelations. (See "The Spinster," TNR, September 1, 1997.)

Key witnesses also refused to cooperate. Huang, California businessman Johnny Chung and former White House aide Mark Middleton, who worked with Trie, threatened to take the Fifth Amendment if called to testify. Witnesses such as Trie and Thai business consultant Pauline Kanchanalak quickly left the country. Most of the key foreigners, including members of the Riady family, which founded the Lippo Group, were also out of the country, and the committee could not gain access to for-

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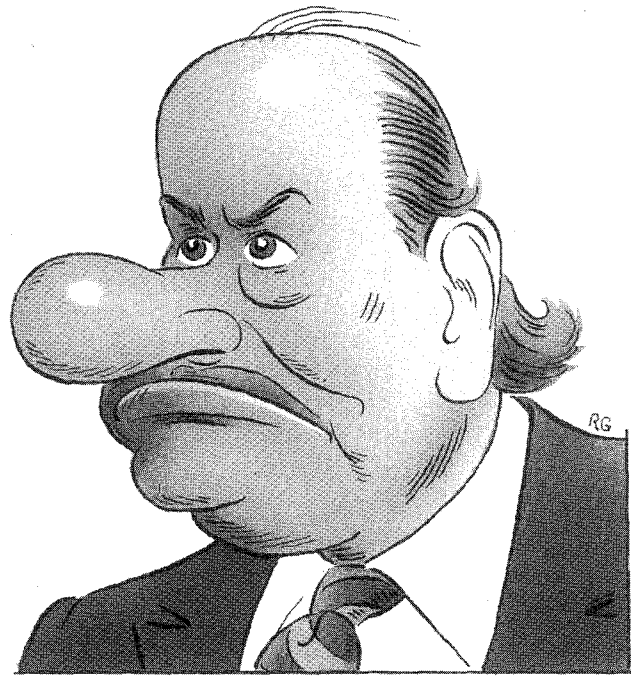
eign bank records that might have shown fund transfers from abroad. Said FBI agent Jerome Campane, who worked for the committee, "It's my understanding the committee's authority stops at the Pacific Ocean line." Without foreign witnesses and bank records, it was virtually impossible to prove an official Chinese, Thai or Taiwanese connection.

But the committee missed the point of what it was supposed to be doing. Witnesses pleading the Fifth make it hard to prove a case, but congressional committees don't have to prove their case—they need only paint a likely scenario for the public. This, Thompson's committee could have done without the cooperation of target witnesses. As many congressional committees have shown before, a witness who takes the Fifth a hundred times in a row can be quite an effective asset to the prosecution's case.

The real problem lay with Thompson. Although he had served as minority counsel during the Watergate hearings, he made one mistake after another in how he defined and conducted the inquiry into foreign influence over the election. In his opening presentation, which established the framework for the hearings, Thompson failed to distinguish between two kinds of espionage. In the traditional type, a government hires agents to infiltrate a rival government. The agents might try to shape policy, or they might simply gather intelligence. They might also try to influence election outcomes—as the U.S. did in Asia and Europe during the cold war. Thompson suggested that he was going to prove this kind of espionage, but he lacked the evidence to make even a strong circumstantial case. Huang and Trie may have been ultimately working for the Chinese government by working for businesses linked to China, but no information has surfaced to suggest they were reporting directly to Chinese spymasters.



FRED THOMPSON BY ROBERT GROSSMAN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

In the second kind of espionage, more common in the last decade, companies and powerful individuals and families—which in Asia are often closely linked to governments—hire agents to shape and observe government policy. Some of these efforts are perfectly legal. Many foreign countries and companies, for instance, hire lobbyists, public relations firms or consultants in the U.S. But companies also employ agents who surreptitiously gather intelligence, try to shape policy and swing elections through contributions. Thompson could have mustered considerable circumstantial evidence that Huang was engaged in this kind of espionage and that Trie was a paid agent of a Chinese businessman (known, in a crypto-spookish manner, by the alias "Mr. Wu") who tried to use contributions to sway American policy. But the committee failed to make this case, too.

Part of the reason was that congressional hearings don't work like criminal trials. If a jury can't convict a defendant of murder, it can still find him guilty of manslaughter. But if a congressional committee fails to prove a spectacular claim, that failure casts doubt upon a whole series of lesser, otherwise demonstrable, suppositions. When Thompson couldn't demonstrate that Huang or Trie were Chinese government agents, he cast doubt upon whether they were agents for businesses and businessmen closely tied to China. By failing to prove traditional espionage, he inadvertently made the charge of economic espionage appear overblown or irrelevant.

For an ex-Hollywood actor, Thompson also displayed surprisingly little understanding of the way nationally publicized hearings work. The campaign finance hearings were a television drama whose success would depend upon the public's impression. But Thompson acted as if they were judicial hearings in which what counted was the careful accumulation of facts. That led to a series of tactical errors, beginning with his decision over whether to call Huang at the outset of the hearings and force him to take the Fifth. Some committee staffers argued that doing so would dramatize the obstacles that the committee faced and would put the burden of proof on Huang and his supporters rather than on the committee. Their argument correctly assumed that the hearings were theater rather than courtroom, but Thompson demurred. According to a committee staff member, Thompson didn't want the hearings to be "too political from the start." He also wanted to "try to be responsible." These were honorable sentiments, but they led to the committee's abysmal failure.

Thompson and chief counsel Michael Madigan also blundered in their choice of witnesses. The lineup became a shooting gallery for minority counsel Alan Baron and committee Democrats, who—with the honorable exception of Connecticut Senator Joseph Lieberman—acted as the devil's advocates on behalf of the administration and the accused. Sullivan, the first witness, had appeared to be cooperative in his deposition; Thompson figured he would help demonstrate White House complicity in Huang's illegal fund-raising. But, faced with television cameras and bolstered by an aggressive Democratic minority, Sullivan turned terse and truculent. He emphasized what he didn't know rather than

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what he knew. New Jersey Senator Robert Torricelli put to Sullivan the question that in a different form many observers wanted to ask the committee itself: "Don't you find it extraordinary that you have no knowledge of any activities of foreign governments' influence—this campaign to provide foreign contributions, to compromise the security of the United States or to influence policy—and you were the lead witness before this committee?"

After Sullivan, it only got worse. To establish the connection between Huang and China, Thompson had to draw a line between Lippo and the Chinese government. To do that, he turned to an "expert witness," Thomas Hampson, the president of Search International, a six-person investigative firm in Schaumberg, Illinois. Hampson's firm was best known for helping a suburban Chicago woman track down her children (their father had abducted them and taken them to Mexico and South America). Hired only a week before the hearings began, Hampson did not appear to be an expert on China, international banking or joint ventures. To connect China and Lippo, he relied entirely on public databases, which merely confirmed what reporters had already gleaned from their own Lexis-Nexis searches: that the Lippo Group, nominally based in Jakarta, was becoming primarily a Chinese conglomerate operated jointly by a Chinese government firm, China Resources Holding Company, that had a reputation for economic espionage.

And Hampson was ill-prepared to defend even this nominal point against the Democrats. Baron got Hampson to contradict himself by agreeing with a Harvard Business School study that characterized Lippo as based in Indonesia and operating as "an unconsolidated federation of companies with a multi-billion-dollar asset base, a second major base in Hong Kong, and activities through the Pacific Rim." Hampson showed little familiarity with how American firms create joint ventures with the Chinese, which allowed Baron to suggest, incredibly, that Lippo was engaged in the same kind of activities in China as Boeing and Coca-Cola. Hampson admitted to Michigan Senator Carl Levin that he didn't know what percentage of Lippo's income came from China. When Lieberman asked what led Hampson to believe that China Resources was used for intelligence purposes by the Chinese government, Hampson responded: "There's a number of published reports in the media about this. There was a BBC broadcast a few years ago, where it quoted intelligence agents on that particular subject. There were a couple of other references, too, that I can't—I have it in my materials, but I can't recall the exact source." Some expert!

Committee spokesman Clark told me that Thompson turned to Hampson only after several academics declined to testify. But Thompson could have turned elsewhere to establish links between Lippo and China. In 1994, Nicholas Eftimiades, of the Defense Intelligence Agency, wrote a book, *Chinese Intelligence Operations*, in which he portrayed China Resources as operating in part as a government intelligence outpost. The people I consulted who were versed in the subject found it inexplicable that Thompson could have relied on someone like Hampson to make this case.

And Hampson was by no means the least effective witness that Thompson called. To present evidence that Huang had operated as an agent of Lippo while still at Commerce, Thompson summoned one of his own junior staff attorneys, John Cobb. When Democrats twitted Thompson for relying on a freshman staff attorney to make his case—it was as if Watergate committee Chairman Sam Ervin had called junior investigator Scott Armstrong to testify—Thompson insisted that other committees had also relied on staff as expert witnesses. But these were subcommittees engaged in unpublicized, highly technical and nonpartisan hearings. Thompson was putting Cobb before a national television audience and asking him to defend a controversial and difficult position in the face of withering cross-examination. The result was predictable: Cobb, like Hampson, was obliterated.

Reluctant to state his own opinions, Cobb decided to rely on the charts that he had drawn up. The charts showed, for instance, the number of calls that Huang, while at Commerce, had placed to people associated with the Lippo Group. But the Democrats were easily able to turn Cobb's charts against him. Under questioning from Torricelli, Cobb couldn't distinguish social from business calls, nor could he explain why the average call was two-and-a-half minutes long. Cobb was reduced to arguing that the charts merely showed facts from which the senators and the public could draw inferences of their own. "I think the information on the chart is honest because there's no attempt to draw an inference or suggest what the substance of the calls or meetings might have been." What, then, was the point of his testimony?

Thompson also made questionable choices of material witnesses. To describe Huang's links to the Los Angeles-based Lippo Bank, which is owned by James Riady, Thompson called the bank's elderly chairman, Harold Arthur, who retired as CEO in February 1994 and has been in poor health since. Arthur claimed that he was unfamiliar with Huang's contacts with the White House before going to the Commerce Department and with the substance of Huang's phone calls back to the bank after he had arrived at Commerce. Arthur repeatedly told the committee that the bank's current CEO, James Per Lee, could better answer their questions, but Thompson canceled Per Lee's appearance at the hearings. That allowed Democrats to charge that Thompson didn't want Per Lee to appear because he would contradict Thompson's contention that Huang was still working for Lippo while at the Commerce Department.

To establish that Huang was operating as an agent of Lippo while at Commerce, Thompson called Paula Greene, a former administrative assistant at the Washington office of Stephens Inc., a Little Rock brokerage firm closely allied with the Riadys and the Lippo Group. Greene testified that Huang had used the Stephens office to make phone calls and receive faxes, but she claimed she never looked at who sent the faxes. Like Arthur, she said she knew less about Huang than someone else at her office: in this case, Stephens's Washington lobbyist Vernon Weaver, who is now U.S. ambassador

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to the European Union, and who was a friend and business associate of Huang. But Thompson not only failed to call Weaver as a witness. He didn't even depose him. Perhaps, you could argue, Per Lee and Weaver would have been more hostile witnesses than Arthur and Greene, but, from a dramatic standpoint, Thompson would have been better off sparring with hostile witnesses than probing peripheral players for information that they claimed to be unable to provide.

Thompson had been billed as another Sam Ervin—a slow-speaking, somewhat bumbling country lawyer on the surface, but underneath a savvy and determined advocate. But while he had moments of acuity—when cross-examining Sullivan—his line of thought often appeared obscure. He sometimes seemed distracted, even confusing the names of key actors. John Bolton, the president of former Republican Party Chair Haley Barbour's controversial thinktank, came out "Dalton." The habitually gray John Glenn managed on several occasions to best the actorly Thompson, outscoring him not only in arguing the facts but in his quiet, deliberate manner. Madigan was completely overshadowed by Baron. After the hearings, one aide to a Republican senator was overheard telling Baron, "If I get in trouble, I want you defending me and them prosecuting me."

It wasn't just Thompson's fault, of course. Generally, most of the Republican committee members seemed ill-prepared for public hearings that required them to improvise rather than rely on questions that staff prepared for them. When the Democrats tried to maintain that John Huang's visits to the Stephens office had been merely social, none of the Republicans pointed out the damning and contradictory fact that Huang had gone to lengths to keep the visits secret, not listing them in his Commerce Department daybook. When the former White House personnel official Gary Christopherson testified that getting Huang a job at Commerce was a "high priority" for the Clinton administration, Lieberman, a Democrat, finally had to ask him the most obvious question: why the White House would consider hiring him as deputy assistant secretary for East Asia and the Pacific where, as Lieberman put it, "American companies on whose behalf he would be advocating would be in competition, possibly, with his former employer."

Even experienced prosecutors among the senators failed. Surprisingly inept was Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, famous (or infamous) for his skewering of Anita Hill during Clarence Thomas's confirmation hearings. Specter and New Hampshire's Robert Smith excelled at asking witnesses questions they couldn't, rather than wouldn't, answer as a way of asserting facts about the case without fear of contradiction. When Thompson called the officials in charge of briefing Huang at Commerce, Specter kept asking them about whether Huang sent faxes from the Stephens office—something they were in no position to know.

SEN. SPECTER: Did you have any knowledge that Mr. Huang would frequently go over to the Stephens Company, which was across the street, where he had access to fax machines?

[CIA official John] DICKERSON: No, none whatsoever. Of course, he had access to fax machines in his own office, too.

SEN. SPECTER: A little tougher, though, to fax to some third party from his own office than from the Stephens Company?

MR. DICKERSON: Yeah, I have no knowledge of that. I only met him in his office, behind closed door, and had no contact with him at any other time.

Or again:

SEN. SPECTER: Well, did you have any knowledge that Mr. Huang regularly went over to the Stephens Company, which was just across the street?

[Commerce official Robert] GALLAGHER: No, sir.

SEN. SPECTER: That the Stephens Company had faxes that Mr. Huang was able to use?

MR. GALLAGHER: No, sir.

SEN. SPECTER: That he made a lot of telephone calls to various places?

MR. GALLAGHER: No, sir.

SEN. SPECTER: That a lot of calls came in to Mr. Huang at Commerce from Lippo?

MR. GALLAGHER: No, sir.

The first time such a device is used, it can be an effective means of reminding the audience what is at stake. Used repeatedly, however, it comes off as a means of harassing witnesses and a substitute for substantive questioning.

The only effective GOP senators were Utah's Robert Bennett and New Mexico's Pete Domenici. Bennett kept returning to the question of Huang, Trie and economic espionage. Domenici, whose skill and intensity as an interrogator matched that of the best Democrats, forced Sullivan to make absurd distinctions in order to explain why the White House coffees had not been "fundraisers." But Domenici spent most of the hearings in budget negotiations with the White House.

During the August recess, the committee held what was described as a "debriefing" to discover what was wrong and where to go next. There were rumors that Thompson himself was thinking of throwing in the towel, but Thompson and his staff decided to salvage the hearings. They did it, however, by departing from the difficult terrain of Wu, Huang, Lippo and China Resources, and journeying instead down the well-worn path of White House malfeasance. The plan afterwards was to be equally without peril. After several weeks of revisiting the Clinton-Gore campaign, they would turn to soft money and independent expenditures. That would give Thompson a chance to appear evenhanded and to join the Democrats in promoting the worthy but futile cause of campaign finance reform. After that, the committee will write its report. And Thompson? He seems to be moving on to his real role, the role that the hearings were meant to set him up for, that of presidential contender in 2000. Last month, the Tennessean, who shunned national venues earlier, joined other GOP hopefuls at the Midwest Republican Leadership Conference in Indianapolis. If he does run, some reporter might ask him how a man who has proved incapable of overseeing a Senate committee with a staff of sixty can govern a nation of 250 million. •

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The case for hypocrisy about adultery.

LIVE AND LET LIE

By Jonathan Rauch

Are you alone? I know you hate when dirty laundry gets aired in public, so this will be our little secret. A famous and prestigious company, one that you've heard of and that shapes the national ideascape, recently named an adulterer to a top management spot. The guy looks like he's a candidate to run the place. But this is no ordinary adulterer; he got the other woman pregnant and then left his wife and child for her. And he makes no secret of any of this! And they promoted him anyway! Have you ever?!

Not so many generations ago, everyone would have known how to deal with this guy. The people in the high social circles in which he travels would have been scandalized. His company would have found a reason to quietly sideline him. He would have retained a job, probably a good one; but his life would never have been quite the same, and, though no one would say so, everyone would know why.

Well, these are the '90s, and we are many years into the deconstruction and destruction of the bourgeois social codes that Sinclair Lewis both described and scorned. As a supporter of homosexual marriage, I would be the last person to call for blind obedience to social tradition. But some petit bourgeois conventions actually work. In fact, they may be indispensable and irreplaceable, even though, or maybe actually because, they do not look very good when subjected to rational scrutiny or legalistic challenge. The mild stigmatization of divorce was probably, on balance, a useful thing (people could get divorced, but they would not do it lightly; we may be moving back this way, especially where children are involved). So was the informal requirement that a boy marry the girl he got pregnant if he wanted to keep his own and his family's good name. So was the disreputability of out-of-wedlock parenthood. So were the honor codes and rules of "gentlemanliness" that preceded today's legalistic college speech codes and Antioch-style sexual-consent regulations.

Although most of those Main Street codes and taboos are dead, the adultery code lives on, if just barely. The code is, more or less, if you screw around, keep it strictly out of sight so that everybody can pretend not to notice. This convention is hypocritical and faux-moralistic and cumbersome and sometimes outright absurd, as in cases when everybody knows who is sleeping around, and everybody whispers about it, yet somehow the affair is still a "secret." Oddly, however, the Main Street rule also works. It probably works better than any successor regime could possibly work. It is also losing strength every day.

Don't get me wrong; I enjoy a public indiscretion as much as the next fellow. There is a delicious and positively Sophoclean irony to the troubles of Michael Bowers, the family-values former attorney general of Georgia whose gubernatorial campaign has been damaged by the revelation of his ten-year adulterous affair. (To fully savor the tang of Bowers's titillations, recall that adultery is illegal in Georgia, and that it was Bowers's decision to prosecute a consenting adult for homosexual acts that led the Supreme Court to uphold Georgia's sodomy law.) Who could suppress a but-for-the-grace-of-God snicker at the poor philanderer who was deputy governor of the Bank of England until his enraged ex-mistress gave his love letters to London's *Sunday Mirror*? ("I spend quite a lot of my time at meetings thinking of you. Perhaps it's a natural reaction to all the men in suits sitting round the table. It leads me to imagine you with no knickers....") Who did not enjoy a giggle or guffaw when Dick Morris, the self-aggrandizing Clinton adviser, was caught sucking on a call girl's toes? Without adultery, how dull art and literature and history and mythology and theology and politics would be, and how much less of them we would have.

But our quiet enjoyment of others' peccadilloes does not answer the question of what to do about adultery. A lot of people would probably advise "doing" nothing, because adultery is a private matter, to be left to the discretion of the people concerned. But, while that may be a reasonable legal policy, it is not a good social policy. Adultery represents a serious problem for society as well as for individuals, on an assortment of levels.

First, society has a strong interest in binding people together into lasting couples. Marriage civilizes and settles men (especially younger men), provides relatively

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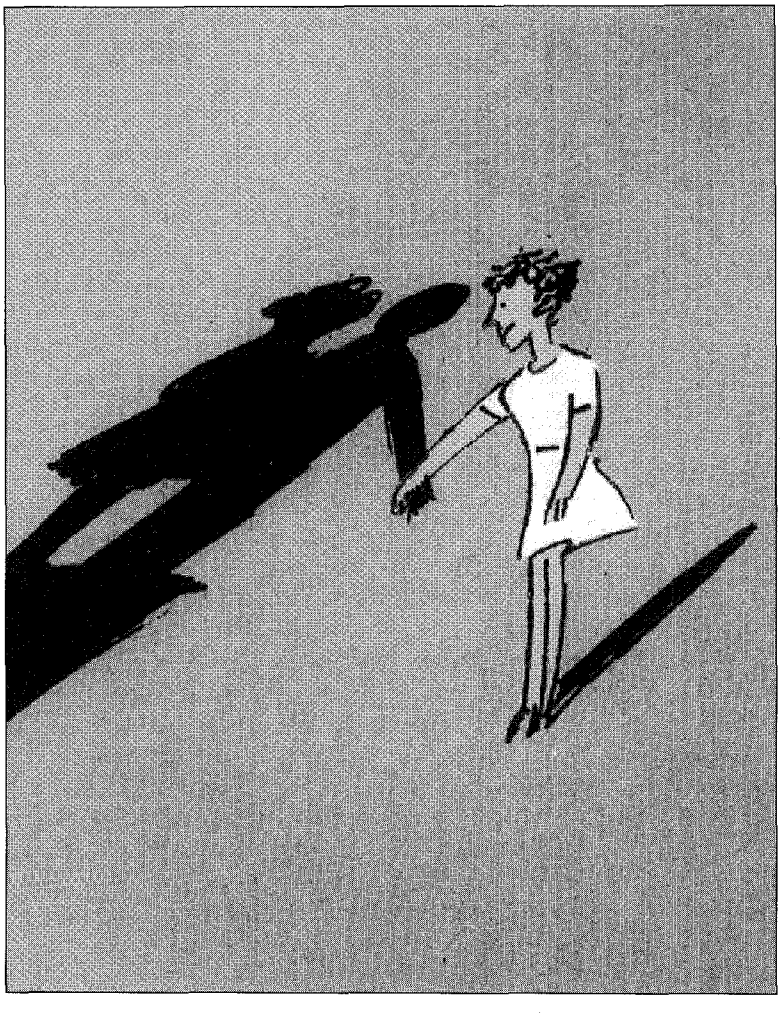
stable and secure homes for children, helps provide economic stability for both partners, and ensures that everyone has somebody whose "job" is to look after him in times of crisis or incapacitation. To serve those functions, marriages must be durable. Thus, a casual acceptance of adultery, which can so easily lead to the dissolution of marriage, would be a problem—especially for women, who still enjoy less economic power than men, on average, and who are more likely to have trouble remarrying in middle age and beyond. And a committed adulterer is a missile with two (or more) warheads, capable of wrecking a whole series of homes. Even in families that remain intact, the knowledge that one parent is cheating on the other can be devastating to children who have the bad luck to find out about it.



Of course, a bit of adultery here and there is to be expected and can be easily borne. But if adultery becomes endemic, then the social consequences could be really dreadful—as with, for example, single parenthood, which is defensible in many particular cases but disastrous when it becomes a norm. So, from society's point of view, adultery is worth worrying about.

One thing to do about it would be to launch one of those tiresome governmental "wars" against it, complete with community-service sentences and "zero tolerance" of philandering, and then to throw in tax breaks for faithful couples and federal fidelity-assistance centers for wandering spouses. I won't dwell on the many reasons why such a "public-sector" approach isn't the way to go. Suffice to say that adultery, like fornication, is too commonplace and too tempting ever to be stamped out; that any real effort to prosecute it would either be absurdly rigid and intrusive or hopelessly arbitrary and exemption-ridden; that this is America, not Iran; etc. Plainly, here is an area where social convention needs to do the regulating and legislating.

Moreover, even in principle, trying to "stamp out" adultery is a bad idea. There is probably an optimal amount of infidelity in any society, and that amount is almost certainly greater than zero. Within certain bounds, adultery has its uses. It can and does lead to divorce and ruin and mayhem, but it can also, if handled with the utmost tact by all parties concerned, provide a way to accommodate human nature to human convention with a reasonable minimum of collateral damage.

Many is the boiler that has exploded for want of a steam valve. The man who looks for one-night stands on his business trips and the woman who relieves the desolation of her lonely marriage with visits now and then to a gentleman friend certainly are not doing anything commendable. On the other hand, in some cases such behavior can help a partner hang on until the marriage is straightened out, or until an exit can be negotiated on acceptable terms. For Japanese wives, discreet affairs have long relieved the tedium of marriages to grunting, overtired husbands. In America, polls find 22 percent of the public saying that adultery can "sometimes" be good for a marriage, and presumably some of these people speak from experience.

Plainly, then, adultery is socially hazardous, but it is also not an evil like murder, to be annihilated with all the brute power of the state. Rather, it is a vice and a temptation to be judiciously discouraged with the sensitive application of flexible adult judgment. The question must be how to keep adultery to a reasonable minimum and soften its corrosive effects, while also recognizing that some people will never be perfectly faithful spouses but can nonetheless be decent ones.

Fortunately, two or three millennia of social experimentation have produced a wonderful answer: genteel hypocrisy. The wink and the closet; or, if you like, plausible deniability; or, if you insist on coming right out with it in the modern fashion—everybody lies.

What a rich and multilayered and fantastically nuanced social policy this turns out to be. At the top level, on the surface, is the public story: adultery is wrong, so never, ever do it. A good story to tell. But of

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course everyone knows that, well, accidents happen, or else there would be no traveling-salesman jokes. So at the second level is a rule for conduct: if you do it, make sure no one finds out about it. That is, keep it a shameful secret, even if you're not ashamed, thus closeting it in darkness where it will not contaminate Sunday-school lessons or shock the neighbors or scare the horses. But even this is not the real policy, though it comes much closer than the stated policy, which is an out-and-out fib. Total secrecy is impossible. In fact, to demand secrecy is probably to militate against it. At your office, which travels faster: news of some marvelous new pension gimmick, or news that the vice president for finance is bonking his assistant? The genius of the closet, for better and for worse, is that its door has a two-way hinge, thanks to the third-level rule, the rule beneath the rule beneath the rule: if you must do it, be discreet enough so that everyone who knows can plausibly pretend not to know. If you'll pretend not to do it, we'll pretend not to see it.

Make no mistake: when misdirected, this "plausible deniability" rule is savagely inhumane. For homosexuals, who cannot help being what they are, the closet meant driving love into an underworld of fear and squalor. But to say that a closet can be a torture chamber is not to say that it is necessarily so. Infidelity is what many once wrongly believed homosexuality to be: a behavior to feel ashamed about but not to drag onto the police docket. For adulterers, the closet is exactly the ticket.

Most obviously, it forces them to be discreet, rather than flagrant, which discourages promiscuity to begin with and circumscribes many affairs by making them inconvenient. Thanks to the closet, cheating on your spouse is a logistically complicated business, requiring that liaisons be mortared between the cracks of already busy lives and camouflaged with halfway-plausible excuses. So obstacles are placed in the way of wandering appetites, and omnipresent gossips, and yentas act as night watchmen and klaxons.

What is perhaps less obvious, but even more important, is the way in which the plausible-deniability rule protects the cuckolded spouse, whom we will assume, for present purposes, to be the wife. It might be thought that the pretense of secrecy is a male-supremacist device to cover up the sins of errant husbands. But in fact the old rule helps redress a natural imbalance of power that favors men. In real life, it is most often men who not only seek but benefit from affairs that threaten marriages, since they can (and often do) remarry a younger, prettier mate—something that is harder for a woman who may have children or wrinkles. The convention of plausible deniability lets the cuckolded wife pretend not to know what's going on. This gives her the option of tolerating her husband's bad habits without being humiliated. It also gives her plenty of room to decide for herself how tolerant she is willing to be, since adultery becomes a marriage-breaking issue only when she chooses to "notice" it. It also gives her a credible threat to wield against her husband: mend your ways or I blow the whistle, to your shame. The old wives' rules thus serve the interests of old wives, providing them with a measure of discretion and dignity in an inherently excruciating and precarious situation.

Plus there is the "correspondent," as the third party used to be called. Assume again that it is a woman. As often as not—preferably most of the time, from society's point of view—her lover will go back to his marriage. Where does that leave her? If the affair is public, then she is damaged goods, at best a jilted lover, at worst an attempted homewrecker. But if the affair is private—meaning "private," wink wink, nod nod—her neighbors and coworkers and friends have the option of pretending it never happened, or commiserating behind closed doors, rather than publicly viewing her as a siren or as a threat to the morality of the young. She can get on with her life, yet the public teaching that adultery is wrong-wrong-wrong is unchallenged.

From a social point of view, any institution that teaches virtue while accommodating frailty is to be cherished; mere law can never do that, but the adulterers' closet can and does. Moreover, society benefits, because the Main Street rules help married couples stay together. Though it is possible to cheat on your spouse in secret, it is impossible to leave her secretly. Then, winking stops and turns to opprobrium, or it should turn to opprobrium. The doctrine of plausible deniability therefore draws about the right line. It allows only as much adultery as can be kept more or less safely underground. Its enforcement arm is at once the most gentle and powerful of sanctions: denial of respectability. It is true that some people can flout bourgeois respectability. The late Sir James Goldsmith, a buccaneering billionaire, made no secret of his mistresses. But even most billionaires crave some measure of public approval, and it is right that people who are not respectable should find obstacles placed along their climb to the top rungs of society—a top corporate job, say, or the presidency of the United States.

So it is a good thing, given the alternatives, for an adulterous minister to preach fidelity and dread discovery. It is a good thing for the neighborhood biddies to whisper with gleeful bile about a certain notorious "swordsman," while never bringing up the subject around his long-suffering, "deceived" wife. It is a good thing to let the wife be "deceived" until she chooses to be otherwise. It is a good thing for tycoons, senators and university presidents to be expected not to embarrass their companies, constituents or alumni with an adultery scandal—even while certain colleagues, staff members and trustees look the other way when a lipstick stain turns up on a collar. And it is a good thing to find various flimsy reasons not to promote an executive who leaves his wife and children for another woman, even while giving a pass to another man who commits adultery on the sly. Adultery is in that class of sin which is

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best handled hypocritically—which is to say, sensitively.

Of course, the trouble with a social policy rooted in hypocrisy is that it is difficult to defend openly. If someone is misbehaving in ways that can hurt spouses and children, damage military morale and cohesion or undermine moral standards, how can the law or the rule books justify ignoring it? If character is a fair qualification for high public office, why not make a public issue of a politician's infidelity, regardless of how discreet he has been? If everybody knows someone is cheating on his wife, how can the press and other public busybodies pretend not to notice? Some social rules are stable and effective only until people start demanding consistency, transparency and due process—which is what is happening now.

A turning point came at a press conference on May 6, 1987. *The Miami Herald* had staked out the Washington townhouse of former Senator Gary Hart, a leading Democratic presidential candidate, and reported that he seemed to have spent the night there with a woman who was not his wife. Hart had been dogged by whispers of "womanizing," but he had not been terribly indiscreet and—after the *Herald* went public with its revelation—his wife stood by him and accepted his pleas of innocence. "In all honesty, if it doesn't bother me, I don't think it ought to bother anyone else," Lee Hart told the press. Under the old rules, that would have been it; but this time the press would not drop the story. In this magazine, Michael Kinsley crowed that "We are witnessing the breakdown, at long last, of an anti-democratic conspiracy among the Washington elite of journalists and politicians" to keep information from voters. Tally-ho!

Hart, of course, withdrew from the race, but before that something more important happened. In that May 6 press conference, Paul Taylor of *The Washington Post* asked The Question. "Have you ever committed adultery?" That word "ever" obliterated the old rules. It said that any act of infidelity, never mind how discreet, was part of the public picture for a public figure. The door was blown off the closet. Hart, understandably nonplussed, stammered, "I do not have to answer that," which was the right answer, at least by the Main Street rules—though it did not save Hart. Even at the time, some of us thought we felt the earth move a little during this exchange. If a decent hypocrisy no longer affords protection—for adulterers, for their partners, for Sunday-school lessons—then what rules are we playing by?

Narrowing the band of plausible deniability from, say, "Be discreet" to "Do nothing that might ever start a rumor, since rumors will be investigated" is unlikely to give us a higher standard of morality among politicians and public figures. (In any case saints make lousy leaders.) A more likely result will be that adultery will be flushed out into the open more often. In other words, the closet will shrink or even disappear. And what then? Either of two things, or some confused combination of the two, must happen. One, exposed adulterers will be steadfastly condemned and disgraced, even (sometimes) against common sense and the wishes of the betrayed spouse. Two, people will quail from condemning so human a sin and instead will decide to relax about it. To see these two options in action, consider two figures caught up in recent high-profile adultery stories, Kelly Flinn and Bill Clinton.

This year, Air Force Lieutenant Flinn, the first woman to pilot a B-52, was threatened with court-martial and finally, under a settlement, forced out of the military after authorities learned that she had been conducting an affair with a civilian who was married (Flinn was single) to an enlisted woman who served on Flinn's base. The military's rules against adultery are, or were until Flinn, enforced in the usual hypocritical way (wink wink). One can understand some of the reasons given for punishing Flinn—according to her prosecutors, she lied to her superior officers; she disobeyed an order to change her conduct; and she threatened morale, order and respect for the officer class by interfering in the marriage of an enlisted person. But, still, the effect of deciding to enforce the rules in Flinn's case did raise striking questions. What in the world did consensual adultery have to do with flying a plane? Should a bit of hanky-panky really be the reason to destroy a career, a career that the government had put a great deal of energy and money into developing?

And so all of a sudden the military was in an absurd position. Without the protection of hypocrisy that the Flinn matter removed, the armed forces faced the possibility of a decimated officer corps. This was not a fanciful concern. The case of Flinn led immediately to the case of Major General John Longhouser, who, despite a long and distinguished record, was forced to retire after a phone tip revealed that he had carried on an affair while he was separated from his wife five years earlier. Then, General Joseph Ralston, vice chairman of the joint chiefs, was effectively disqualified for the top job after it came out that he had carried on an affair *thirteen* years earlier, though he, too, had been separated from his wife at the time.

Things had gotten plainly ludicrous, but if you can't wink, then you can't wink. Desperate for a policy that was both consistent and committed, the hapless generals had set up a sexual-misconduct hotline, but in the wake of the Flinn affair reports of adultery came in so fast and thick that the Army shut down the hotline altogether. Senior officers, reported *The New York Times*, "expressed concerns that minor transgressions reported to the telephone line were ending the careers of distinguished officers." At the end of the day the whole comedy proved what we already knew: no public, legalistic system of anti-adultery rules can possibly work, not even for two weeks at a stretch.

The other path away from hypocrisy is the one that we will actually take: airing adultery in public, and just shrugging about it. Consider, in this connection, Bill Clinton. When, in 1992, Gennifer Flowers went public

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with allegations that Governor Clinton had carried on an affair with her, this was seen, rightly, as a story that reflected on the character and veracity of a presidential candidate. So, next thing we knew, Clinton was on CBS's "60 Minutes" with Mrs. Clinton at his side, doing what honesty demanded: confessing that there had been "problems" in their marriage and that he had "acknowledged wrongdoing," showing that they had patched it up, and asking for the people's forgiveness. The people gave it, as they should have, under the circumstances. It was admirably unhypocritical and mature: confession had been taken and the sinner forgiven.

But step back and, admittedly, skip lightly over the inevitably differing circumstances of two inevitably different cases, and what you see is this: in 1987 a bright young presidential candidate got caught with his pants down and was forced from the race, and in 1992 another bright young presidential candidate got caught with his pants down and was elected president. In 1992, the public, probably for the first time, decided that it could live with an acknowledged adulterer as president.

"Acknowledged," not "adulterer," is the key word there. Personally, I'm not against electing adulterers president. (In fact, I'm probably for it, considering the alternative—remember Jimmy Carter.) What makes for uneasiness here is not the adultery itself but the combination of open inquiry, open acknowledgment and open indifference. According to a *Newsweek* poll, adultery is at the bottom of the list of reasons to vote against a presidential candidate. (Only 35 percent consider it a reason to choose someone else—below taking drugs and cheating on taxes.) The Main Street rule, by placing a social value on both deniability and denial, understood implicitly that once people openly acknowledge adultery, they are already halfway toward being blasé about it. As people get used to hearing about this or that prominent person's infidelities, the taboo evaporates. Then the burden of being discreet shifts from the adulterer to the moralist who objects to adultery.

That executive who left his wife and child for the other woman was, in some sense, being honest: he followed his heart. The company that gave him the big promotion was also being honest: it did not pretend that his adultery compromised his job performance. But if he can be so overt and people will just shrug ("Well, that's his own business"), what cards do his wife and children have left to play, short of an excruciating lawsuit? And why should he even pretend to be ashamed? So the real-world alternative to "You pretend not to do it, we'll pretend not to see it" may be something like "Sleep around openly, and anyone who disapproves can keep his moralizing to himself."

I am uncomfortable making a case for hypocrisy—who wouldn't be?—and I don't doubt that honesty has its good points. Yet again and again, with illegitimacy and abortion and idleness and dependency and so much else, we have found that there is a price for destigmatizing behaviors that should be discouraged but not illegal, and the price can sometimes be high. Today large majorities of every age group say adultery is wrong, and only a few admit to engaging in it: fewer than one in four men, and about half as many women, report ever having been unfaithful. Of course, people lie about adultery, so those figures should be taken as lower bounds. But that is just the point. Imagine a society where, say, 50 or 75 percent of the people cheerfully admit to infidelity, and you imagine a very different sort of place: one where people take adultery for granted, where a wife's implicit threat to "go public" or a boss's implicit threat to be shocked ceases to be much of a deterrent, and where it becomes harder to tell children, with a straight face, that cheating is really, truly wrong—which is still a fairly useful thing to be able to say.

In January of 1996, François Mitterrand's funeral was attended by all three of his children—only two of whom were by his wife, Danielle. The third was Mazarine, the 21-year-old daughter of his mistress, Anne Pingeot. The wife and mistress and all the children stood by the casket, grieving together. The president of France had been an active father to his illegitimate daughter; he had spent his last Christmas with the Pingeots and his last New Year's with his wife and sons. His wife later said she had come to accept the situation. "Yes, I had married a seducer, and I had to put up with that," she said. "I was never bored with him." Only after his death was the truth acknowledged explicitly and publicly—except that, of course, many people must have known, including the population of France after a magazine published a picture of Mitterrand with his daughter about a year before he died. Yet for years everyone pretended not to know or not to see, and it was understood that the country was better "not knowing" about the president's second family than either disgracing him or failing to disgrace him. So hypocrisy magically squared the circle: it forced the president to be discreet, spared his wife a public humiliation and allowed his daughter to know her extraordinary father, all while he served honorably in office. We will never know, but perhaps the result was to save a presidency, save a marriage and save a child. Granted, no one does hypocrisy as well as the French. But can anyone imagine such a sublime collective wink in this country, now?

The Main Street rule is not dead yet. Respectable newspapers are still a bit skittish about outing adulterers, even if respectable companies are no longer skittish about promoting them. We can only hope, this time, for a decent dishonesty to prevail. A better rule than the emerging "acknowledge and shrug" standard—for the press, for the public, for all of us sinners—is: if the adulterer takes all reasonable steps to be discreet, if he performs his other duties as parent and spouse and citizen, and if his mate chooses to hang on, then *nothing happened.* This is not "covering up" (the press did cover up for President Kennedy, who was not discreet) so much as it is being grown-up. •

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THE HARD QUESTIONS

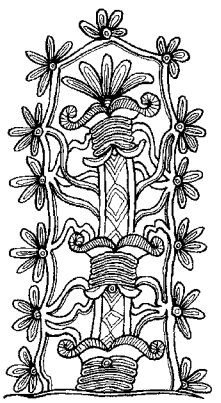
The underworked American

I am the UPS Foundation Professor of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton—the beneficiary of the enlightened philanthropy of the United Parcel Service twenty-five years ago when the Institute's School of Social Science was established. Even if I weren't sitting in this comfortably endowed chair, I think I would recognize UPS as one of the country's better companies. Its workers are unionized (in contrast, say, to Federal Express's), and the work they do is respected. Like Napoleon's soldiers, who were said to carry a marshal's baton in their knapsack, the men and women who deliver packages are proudly described by UPS as its future leaders. Indeed, today the head of the company and the president of the Teamsters' union that represents its workers are both former deliverymen.

In recent years, however, the company has not looked as good as its ideology suggests. Very few of the part-time workers it has hired in increasing numbers can possibly imagine that they carry a marshal's baton. The UPS dispute with the Teamsters was a dispute well lost, for it was the union, not the company, that was defending equality of opportunity. But this was only one battle in a long war; the critical issue raised in the strike is going to be with us for a long time. The company tried to deny its importance, so perhaps this was the union's major achievement: it has put the question of the length of the working day back on the public agenda.

The question was on the public agenda well over a century ago, when workers and their leaders, and a wonderful assortment of agitators, organizers, reformers and revolutionaries (whose voice is no longer heard) claimed that the day was too long. At twelve hours and more, it certainly was too long, and the protracted and ultimately successful struggle for an eight-hour day was one of the important popular victories of the modern age. That victory seemed to settle the question. A third of the day for work was about right for most people, although bargaining continued about lunch and coffee breaks. (Of course, a company could still ask workers for longer hours—the law simply said the company had to pay them overtime.) Still, there is nothing ordained about working a third of the day, and up to the very minute it was won, the owners and managers who opposed it insisted that market forces dictated a longer working day. Competition was in fact an obstacle, since any company that accepted the eight-hour maximum put itself at a disadvantage in a world of companies that didn't—which is why the maximum was eventually imposed by law.

Now the question is back in another form—the working day is often too short—and it doesn't seem plausible that it will be resolved by a state-imposed minimum. What's wrong with a company like UPS hiring workers for a four-hour day? In principle, there is nothing wrong with part-time work: it suits the needs of many people (who have other things to do); and it fits the pattern of certain sorts of work. If there is nothing ordained about an eight-hour day, every job doesn't necessarily divide into eight-hour segments.



But, in today's economy, a four-hour day doesn't make for a working life; it doesn't pay a decent hourly wage; it doesn't support a family; and it doesn't open up opportunities for advancement. UPS argued that all its part-time workers are potential full-time workers—they can graduate to full-time, and beyond, just as sorters and deliverymen have done in the past. But the union's response was more persuasive: since 60 percent of its UPS members are part-timers, and since the company is creating very few new full-time jobs (since 1993, the year of the last contract, 83 percent of the company's hires have been part-timers), what is there to graduate to? Even assuming that opportunities are equal for part-timers, what value does that equality have when the available opportunities are being systematically reduced?

The problem doesn't arise only at UPS. Throughout the economy, full-time job seekers are taking part-time or temporary work instead. I see this most clearly in the academic world, where an increasing proportion of undergraduate teaching is done by adjuncts and assistants of various kinds, who work on short-term contracts and cannot expect to have normal academic careers. (This was the issue at the heart of the recent strike by graduate assistants at Yale.) It is now possible to imagine an economy in which the American workforce will be divided into a full-time elite and a large number of harried, unhappy and exploited workers rushing from one part-time or temporary job to another, always insecure, barely able to make ends meet.

The Teamsters argued during the UPS strike that company productivity actually declined as more part-time workers were hired. The turnover rate among part-time workers was very high (something over 400 percent: UPS recruited and trained 180,000 people for part-time work in 1996, only 40,000 of whom were with the company at the end of the year), and as a result the advantages of loyalty and experience were almost totally lost. That may be right, and yet the market seems to like part-time and temporary work, just as it liked full-time overwork in, say, 1840, because on balance it is still cheaper. A fixed working day, even if there are many exceptions (as there will be, and should be), is a serious constraint on management. Maximum efficiency requires, so the world was told in 1840 and again in 1997, though not in so many words, *disposable workers*—men and women who will work long hours or short, "as necessary," and disappear without complaint when the necessities change.

But workers will resist disposability whether it is efficient or not. Some want flexible hours, and exactly how to arrange that for part of the workforce without making others vulnerable isn't clear. For the great majority of workers, however, something like a standard day is as important now as it was in the nineteenth century, and the fight for a standard—it can certainly be less than eight hours so long as it pays a living wage—may well play a role in the revival of the unions, just as it helped in their early formation. (For a sense of its importance in the 1840s and '50s, take a look at Marx's chapter on "the working day" in *Das Kapital*, perhaps the best piece of writing in that often turgid book.)

The Teamsters were right about UPS, but it may be impossible to enforce a standard day one company at a time. And, as I've already acknowledged, the government is not likely to help out by mandating a new workday—at least in the short run—although it is possible to imagine a variety of regulations with regard to benefits and wages that would ease the strain on part-timers. This means workers need a much stronger labor movement than they have today, both to press for new legislation and to unionize the competition, thus keeping the playing field level. Companies like UPS need unions, too. Perhaps UPS will help the Teamsters organize drivers and sorters at Federal Express.

MICHAEL WALZER

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

French Wars

Several times in Jacques Audiard's new film, *the camera* pans along a line of chamber music players. They have nothing to do directly with the film. These shots seem to be Audiard's way of reminding us that we are watching a story aided by music, that the reality of what we are seeing is as much an artifice as the character of the hero. The film ends when the music stops.

A Self-Made Hero (Strand) has a double French lineage. On the one hand it descends cinematically from Sacha Guitry, who told tales of deceit and intrigue with a deftness that paralleled the elegance of the stories. The film's other line is from such novels as those by Marcel Aymé, a Frenchman concerned to show mordantly that French heroism in occupied France was, in great degree, *blague.*

We first see Jean-Louis Trintignant, as the hero today, telling us a bit about the story of his life and observing that lives, as given, are unsatisfactory. The best lives are made up, he says. Then we see his character, Albert, making it up—from boyhood on. The start is his juvenile fantasies in his bedroom, in a small town in the 1930s. As his life goes on, as war and Germans come, both his privacies and his masquerades increase. He is not naturally aggressive: he needs to be coached about how to con others. But he learns.

The screenplay by Audiard and Alain Le Henry, from a novel by Jean-François Deniau, takes Albert from his home with his widowed mother, who has pretenses of her own, through the compliance of Frenchmen with the German occupiers, to a marriage that in some degree just happens to Albert. In time he revolts at the incongruence between his life and his fantasies, and he runs away to Paris.

There he becomes a prince of serendipity. He starts by panhandling at a nightclub door and, with some advice from a new friend, soon moves upward. He ends as a postwar lieutenant-colonel in occupied Germany (reversal is always a neat device) where he finds the romance he has wanted and where all does not end too neatly.

If we object that things like this don't really happen, this sophisticated film nods and says, "That's why I exist." In a sense it's a revenge film, wreaking vengeance, through cleverness and luck, on the strictures of life. Throughout, Albert is just clever enough to make the most of his breaks, like a hustling Candide, and to enjoy himself.

Which we, too, enjoy, principally because of Audiard's direction. If there is such a thing as tongue-in-cheek directing—and Guitry showed that there is—Audiard has mastered it. Albert's maturation from boyhood to young manhood is shown in a speeded-up sequence of calisthenics. A grifter's downfall is summed up in the one shot of his being taken away by the police. Throughout the film Audiard moves lightly, elliptically, with a style that beguiles us into sharing both the jokes and the bitterness beneath.

Mathieu Kassovitz gives Albert just the right degree of aloofness so that we can believe he is bemused without seeming dim. In all the roles, Audiard has cast actors who enrich the texture. Anouk Grinberg as Albert's real romance, Bernard Bloch as the majordomo of a German château where Albert is billeted, and Albert duPontel as a smoothie who teaches him a thing or three, all join to make the satire sharp but pleasant.

Capitaine Conan (Kino) is about France one world war earlier. The director Bertrand Tavernier co-wrote the screenplay with Jean Cosmos from a 1934 novel by Roger Vercel. This collaboration was a mixed blessing. Tavernier is one of the best directors alive; but his screenplays impede his directing talent.

The setting is immediately arresting—one of the "forgotten" fronts of World War I (like Italy), far from the French-Belgian trenches that usually signify that war. In 1918, French troops are in the Balkans fighting Bulgarians, with plenty of blood on both sides. News of the armistice reaches them belatedly, as if they had been overlooked. Then demobilization lags: these troops are left there, armed and ready, shuttling between Bulgaria and Romania, until they find further war in an engagement with troops from revolutionized Russia.

That is one subject. Running through this turbulence is another subject, an individualized angry stream within the general agon—a unit of what in World War II would be called commandos or raiders, headed by Captain Conan. These men seem to operate independently of higher command, infiltrating enemy lines, fighting ferociously, killing more of the enemy with knives than with guns. Conan, a grim firebrand, calls his

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Guantanamera. *The last film by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea satirizes Castro's Cuba through the difficulties of a funeral cortège traversing the island. Sly and warm. (Reviewed 7/29/97)* **In the Company of Men.** *With the cruelty of Restoration comedy, two modern young men play a trick on a young woman, which ends surprisingly. Perceptively acted. Acutely written and directed by Neil LaBute. (9/1/97)* **Mrs. Brown.** *The much wondered-about story of Queen Victoria and her Scottish groom, John Brown. Engaging actors in an engaging story. (8/4/97)* **Ulee's Gold.** *Another northern Florida film by Victor Nunez, exploring the region's qualities. Peter Fonda, grizzled and firm, as a beekeeper whose family gets entangled with crime. Overplotted but appealing. (7/7/97)*—**SK**

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men "warriors": the other troops are, in his view, mere "soldiers."

After the war another officer visits Conan, now married and living out his days, with not many left, in a country inn. Conan asks his visitor to greet other warriors of his kind, should he meet them—3,000 of them, Conan says, who really won the war.

What is the film *about*? Is Tavernier paying long-delayed attention to a front of the war that has been neglected? Or is he—this dedicated humanist—celebrating the exploits of semi-wild killers who made their own war within the larger one? We can't think that he intended to do both: the subjects are not reciprocal, and the dynamics of the film, its engines of motion, do not capitalize on or really finish either of the subjects. The film is like a double cavalry charge, a big group and a small one, that crosses a hill and then just decelerates.

Even in some of his best films, *The Judge and the Assassin* and *Let Joy Reign Supreme*, Tavernier has had trouble in finishing either with resolution or with effective ambiguity. In his previous film about World War I, *Life and Nothing But*, he set some poignant themes in motion, then hurriedly tied them off at the end with a letter. Here again he seems to have relied on the very weight of the subjects to be sufficient if the filmmaking was good.

But what filmmaking it is, intense and spectacular. Tavernier's war, widespread over rolling hills, snaking through trenches, pressed against us in close-ups, is breathtaking. He works largely in brief shots, often handheld, edited so that they are not dizzying, they are cumulative. He lets war dramatize itself, cannons and wagons and horses and corpses. With the one reservation that the women in the taverns and brothels are all a touch too gorgeous, he gives realism a new luster. But all these excellences only lead eventually to greater disappointment when the film fritters away. •

Jed Perl on Art

The Incredible Shrinking Classics

A more appropriate title for "Objects of Desire: The Modern Still Life," which was the big summer show at the Museum of Modern Art, would have been "Clearing the Table." Margit Rowell, who organized the exhibition, arrived at the Modern in 1994 to head the Department of Drawings. This wasn't the first major event that Rowell organized at the Modern; she did last year's show of drawings by Antonin Artaud. But this was her first attempt at a broad historical view within the context of the Museum of Modern Art. And the result was so argumentative and didactic that it immediately earned Rowell a place among the bulldozer ideologues who nowadays decide which twentieth-century art is and is not worthy of the public's consideration.

There was reason to hope for something better from this distinguished curator. In a career that has already included stints at the Guggenheim, the Fundacio Joan Miró in Barcelona and the Pompidou in Paris, Rowell has come to be recognized as one of the most discriminating museum professionals working with classic modern art today. Her past triumphs include "The Planar Dimension," a revelatory show of Constructivist reliefs at the Guggenheim in 1979, and the recent Brancusi retrospective in Paris and Philadelphia. Unfortunately, her abiding feeling for the expressive power of pared-down forms was of little use when it came to organizing "Objects of Desire."

The show was an attempt to make sense of the twentieth-century continuation of a genre that had already reached a pinnacle with Chardin 200 years ago. It began wonderfully, with works such as Braque's dazzlingly filigreed *Pedestal Table* (1911). After a while, though, Rowell's attention seemed to shift from painting to the martyrdom of painting at the hands of what she regards as a fast-forward consumer culture, and by the end we were left with the know-nothing reductiveness of Andy Warhol's Brillo boxes and a picture of a table empty of everything save a rather ugly tablecloth by Domenico Gnoli. The show was a slickly engineered highway to nowhere.

Rowell has every right to see a delicious play of spatial ambiguity in Matisse's *Still Life with Blue Tablecloth* (1908-09), where a green bottle is just barely distinguished from the swirling patterns of the cloth. And there is no question that in Picasso's collage *Siphon, Glass, Newspaper, and Violin* (1912) the elements of a still life are decomposing right before our eyes. But the inferences that she drew from these delightful ambiguities were MOMA boilerplate, and Rowell's newcomer status on West 53rd Street only seems to make her more orthodox in her approach. At the Modern, the enigmatic arrangements that Matisse and Picasso regarded as expanding the possibilities of painting are too often viewed as an attempt to pull painting apart. And sure enough, by the end of "Objects of Desire," any artist naïve enough to think about painting in terms of complex internal relationships had been deemed irrelevant. The show's last galleries were a disaster. They included a giant tissue box with a sort of pipe running through it by Robert Gober, a spiral glass table covered with fake vegetables by Mario Merz, and Charles Ray's wooden table with motorized objects attached to create—get it?—a not-so-still life.

Rowell seems to be aware that the latter sections of "Objects of Desire" made a hash of what most of us think of as a still life, which is a study of relationships between objects. In her catalog, she even observes that Duchamp and some other Dadaists would "turn over in their graves" if they knew that their enigmatic objects were being corralled into a tradition that also includes Cézanne. But she can't worry overly much about misrepresenting Dada, since she has her own problem: if she's going to toe the MOMA line about modern art moving toward increasingly unitary all-in-one images, then the intricate balancing act that is a still life will no longer make any sense. All-in-one imagery has its own kind of power, which you feel in an Ellsworth Kelly painting or a Richard Serra sculpture, but to assume that it's the only kind of power in contemporary art is to betray a prejudice, and for a curator to impose that prejudice on still life will inevitably lead to the sort of fiasco that was on view at the Modern over the summer.

"Objects of Desire" received a drubbing from critics across a fairly wide spectrum, who lamented the absence of much that can be called still life painting in the later galleries, and singled out among the exclusions Fairfield Porter, William Bailey and Nell Blaine. Glenn D. Lowry, the director of the museum, made a preemptive strike against this line of criticism in a forward to the catalog, where he remarks that the show "should not be seen as a survey or systematic reading of the still life" in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, there is no denying that Rowell has an ambitious

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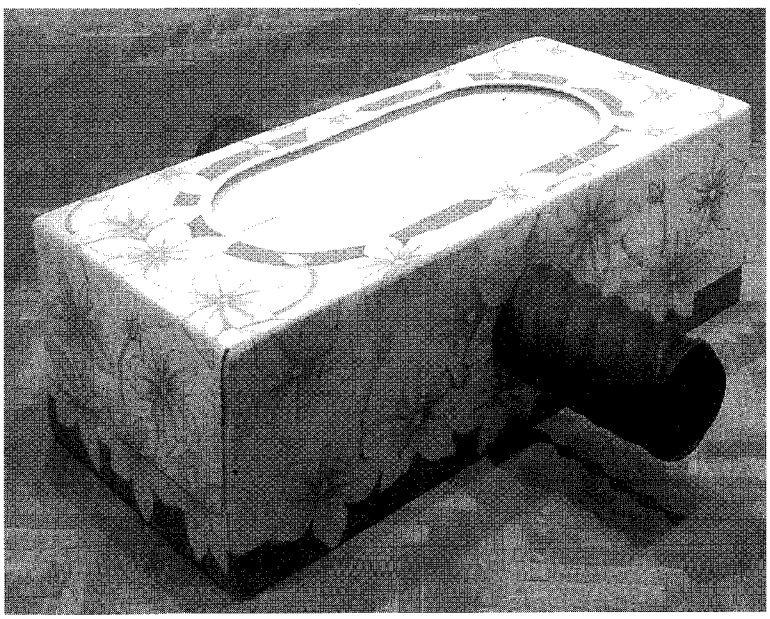
recapitulation in mind when she observes in her preface that "to attempt to tell the story of the modern still life is virtually equivalent to trying to tell the story of twentieth-century avant-garde art." If we take Rowell at her word, and I think we should, the significance of this exhibition goes way beyond any particular inclusions or exclusions. "Objects of Desire" was a mixture of mandarin elegance, ideological rigidity and a slavery to fashion that would have been almost unbelievable, except that we have seen this kind of thing at the Museum of Modern Art many times before.

This exhibition arrived at a moment when the museum was deep into the initial planning stages of what promises to be its largest expansion ever, so that "Objects of Desire" could be taken as a sobering reminder of what twentieth-century art, MOMA-style, is all about. The museum, which recently bought the Dorset Hotel on West 54th Street, is looking for more space to exhibit, among other things, the sort of mixed media behemoths by Gober, Merz and Ray that dominated the close of this exhibition. Rowell is far from being the only curator at the museum who's out to prove that these artists are the true heirs to the museum's glamorous past. Robert Storr, who tends to concentrate on contemporary art, leans in the same direction; he organized the show of contemporary installations called "Dislocations" in 1991. And what with all the art-world buzz around these not-painting-not-sculpture objects, you can be sure that many curators at the Modern will make whatever historical case is needed to get some hot new art in the door. The museum is deep into a rethinking of priorities that begins by clearing the table—a preliminary step before putting everything back on the table in what we're told will be a more logical fashion. But if the later rooms of "Objects of Desire" were any indication, the museum may end up by pulling the rug out from under the table.

As it happens, still life is a metaphor used by the Swiss architectural firm of Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron in a statement attached to their proposal for the museum's expansion. This firm is one of three finalists, selected by a committee consisting of trustees and Lowry, that reviewed the preliminary proposals offered by ten architects whom the Modern invited to consider the future of the museum's physical plant. All of these proposals were on display at the Modern earlier this summer in "Toward the New Museum of Modern Art: Sketchbooks by Ten Architects," a show organized by Terence Riley, Chief Curator in the Department of Architecture and Design. What Herzog and de Meuron see as the elements in their still life are the separate components of the Modern, among which they include the original building, designed by Philip L. Goodwin and Edward Durell Stone in 1939, Philip Johnson's sculpture garden of 1953, the condominium tower of 1984, and the Dorset Hotel site. Seeing the buildings in terms of "a 'still life' concept," they explain, "has the advantage that pieces can be taken away and added to, according to the willingness to grow or change."



Courtesy Museum of Modern Art

UNTITLED, 1994-95, BY ROBERT GOBER

Of course, a great still life is a painting in which there is nothing that you want to change, but then the Museum of Modern Art, although a brilliant building, was never a great one. This structure, with its elegantly gridded façade, might be said to have originally been about the icy enchantments of modern style. Having once shocked people, it is now a period piece; and in that transition you have one of the essential paradoxes of the Museum of Modern Art. Rem Koolhaas, the Dutch architect whose proposal for the Modern's expansion includes some jazzily exuberant collages with things snipped from magazines, poses this paradox when he writes that "theoretically, MOMA is about newness. Newness is ambiguous. It cannot last; it cannot have a tradition."

This is not news. The problem was already recognized by Alfred H. Barr Jr., the director of the museum when it was founded in 1929, at a time when Post-Impressionism was already nearly half a century old. Initially, Barr thought that the solution to an ever-aging modern art would be to create a fluid policy of acquisitions and deaccessions. When works reached a certain vintage, they would be given or sold to more traditional museums. At one point the Modern had such an agreement with the Metropolitan Museum of Art. By the 1950s, however, the museum's collections had become a treasure that quite understandably nobody on 53rd Street wanted to part with, and what was referred to as a permanent collection of masterworks was put in place. From then on, the Modern was saddled with the immensely complicated task of relating the art of the present, or at least whatever aspects of it were deemed significant, to an ever more remote modern past.

Barr probably envisioned the museum as a sort of modern cathedral, a union of high and applied arts that the founders of the Bauhaus in Germany had been dreaming of a few years before. Barr wanted to show the American public the genius of modern art, and in order to do so he had to give the material a popular appeal while respecting its frequently enigmatic character. And in the years when the modern dream was being blotted out by the Nazis in Germany, the great director managed to create a museum that was both elitist and populist—an eventual mix of everything from Malevich to Mae West. Those who first encountered the museum in the halcyon days after World War II may have initially been attracted by the austere beauty of the art in the galleries, but what kept them coming back was the feeling that Dwight Macdonald was responding to, in a profile of Barr published in *The New Yorker* in 1953, when he announced that "the joint has been jumping for 25 years."

Macdonald, the critic who wrote about bestsellers and dictionaries and skewered upper-middle-class taste with the term "Midcult," was a delicious choice to write about Barr. Reading his profile forty-four years after it was first published, I'm reminded that the Modern was never averse to pleasing the crowds. To the contrary, at a time when most museums were still dusty institutions, this museum

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saw its desire to be popular as part of what made it avant-garde. One writer whom Macdonald quotes regarded the Modern of the '40s as "a sort of factory for the mass production of art 'features,' motion pictures, travelling displays, and quantities of printed matter." A half-century later, Barr's altogether admirable desire to make unfamiliar art popular has been turned into the monstrous hunger for box office at any cost that now dominates every museum presentation of twentieth-century art. The Modern itself has been left in the peculiar position of an institution that can no longer make the present jibe with the glorious future that it predicted in the past. "Objects of Desire" was a case in point.

You have to respect a museum devoted to the new that struggles to preserve some of what's best about its earlier incarnations. The sculpture garden hasn't been obliterated, and the expansion in 1984 included at least an attempt at preserving the museum's legendary, sleekly austere staircase, up which so many of us can remember hurrying to take a long, hard look at modern art. At the Modern, however, noble sentiments have never been allowed to get in the way of a principle of permanent growth. And the growth curve can begin to look rather astonishing, when we consider that the Modern has expansion on its mind in 1997, only seventeen years after basically closing for four years in order to rebuild. I saw the point of opening an income-producing condominium tower in 1984, but did the museum's new lobby have to look like something dreamed up by a third-rate developer? Even the museum's most avid admirers may now wonder if the physical plant, save for the 53rd Street façade and the sculpture garden, is worth fighting for. A sound case can be made that the museum needs the added space of the Dorset site on 54th Street, which gives the museum a dominant chunk of the block between 53rd and 54th Streets and Fifth and Sixth Avenues. But what about the old intimate Modern? Is there anybody in charge who is really trying to come to grips with the sad fact that this expansion is going to intimidate museum-goers with its density and its sprawl?

The essential challenge that confronted the architects who responded to the Modern's call for expansion proposals was to bring order to a variegated group of structures that occupy much of a city block. Along with Herzog and de Meuron, the other finalists are Yoshio Taniguchi (Japan) and Bernard Tschumi (USA). The losers include

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Wiel Arets (Netherlands), Steven Holl (USA), Toyo Ito (Japan), Rem Koolhaas (Netherlands), Dominique Perrault (France), Rafael Vinoly (USA), and Tod Williams and Billie Tsien (USA). In the mandate given to the architects, they were encouraged to think in broad, conceptual terms. Herzog and de Meuron speak of a "landscapelike building with courtyards and gardens inside and on top of the roof." Bernard Tschumi says that "interlocking is the name of the game." I hope he's not the winner. His previous work has a glass-and-angled-metal drama that is all too reminiscent of the museum's last effort to create a viable flow of space with those ghastly lobby escalators. They suggested a department-store hard sell: size up the merchandise as you move from place to place. And there's going to be lots more to gawk at now that the museum is entering the age of what Tschumi himself refers to as "MOMALL."

Moving ever larger numbers of people through this kind of high-density museum site is a daunting prospect. Given the idiosyncratic shape of the museum plant, a single entry hall with access to all parts of the building, such as you have at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, is impossible. Many of the architects that the Modern solicited for ideas have proposed a heightened presence for entrance and egress on 54th Street, perhaps with a block-through passageway. Not surprisingly, a good deal of attention has been lavished on the museum's location in midtown, the beating heart of the metropolis. This focus can completely derail theoretically minded contemporary architects, who would in any event rather fantasize about postmodern urban dynamics than imagine galleries with four walls.

Fortunately, the museum has not chosen as one of its finalists Rem Koolhaas, whose book *Delirious New York* (1978), a Dutchman's paean to the exotic allure of urbanism in overdrive, finds echoes in many of the proposals. Obviously, the midtown setting underlines the Modern's urgent spirit; the very pace of the city street finds a mysterious echo in our quickening heartbeat as we walk into the Modern's galleries full of Mondrians, Matisses and Brancusis. What Koolhaas refuses to see is that this is an experience that can take care of itself. When he observes, in his comments on the MOMA expansion, that "the city should be admitted to the museum," he is threatening to turn the subtlest metaphorical apprehension into yet another example of knock-'em-over-the-head didactic exhibitionism. Koolhaas says that the museumgoing experience, at least when it concerns contemporary art, should be like "an American night, illuminated by electronic haze, glowing and flickering." If you want Times Square, Koolhaas, walk eleven blocks south.

Even Koolhaas grants the older paintings and sculptures in the collection at least "(simulated) daylight," and there seems to be general agreement that intimate-style galleries will be preserved for modern classics. Yet those galleries will most likely end up feeling like a boutique—the Classic Modern Shop—in a complex with other areas dedicated to the oversized contemporary art that the museum believes is what it should collect, as well as to photography, film, design, library, offices and retail shops. Among the finalists, Yoshio Taniguchi provides the most levelheaded and concise work, with an unwavering focus on a successful union of galleries and public spaces, and a refusal to obscure problems with flashy jargon. The clarity and the modesty of his ideas, as well as the restrained International Style of his work until now, make him the most credible of the choices that the Modern is currently exploring. The museum needs sanity, not spectacle.

A little more modesty and a lot less mixed-media flash would have helped "Objects of Desire," too. And since the museum is considering alternative building proposals, why not suggest other curatorial approaches? You can get an inkling of how different "Objects of Desire" could have looked if you consider another still life show that was mounted this summer by another great modern art institution, the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C. There is no point in attempting a direct comparison, since the Modern's was an elaborate loan show that spanned the century, while the Phillips's was limited to its own collection and basically went only to World War II. Still, it was immediately apparent that these shows represented two radically different understandings of modern art. Many of the same artists were represented—Braque, Picasso, Morandi—but they were marshaled to tell two different stories. At the Phillips, the underlying assumption is that all painting, no matter how antinaturalistic, creates a magical illusion within the confines of a painted surface. At the Modern, twentieth-century painting is about the end of such illusions.

Rowell included a still life that Morandi painted in 1919, when he was not yet 30. She wanted to draw our attention to the way that Morandi's playful approach to Renaissance laws of volume and void creates an object-unfriendly environment. And once Rowell had presented us with this destabilized pictorial space, she saw no alternative but to evacuate it in favor of the literal space in which the Surrealist thingamajig reigns supreme. Yet Morandi himself drew no such conclusions from his earlier work. At the Phillips, we saw him still at work in 1950, creating a strongly knit structure that is dreamily unreal—and all the more unreal because it respects the volumetric integrity of a number of individual bottles and pitchers. Bonnard, a man who loves the surfaces of things too much for Rowell's taste, was at the Phillips and not at the Modern. The Phillips included two Marsden Hartleys and a beautiful golden-gray Walter Sickert, of mushrooms and eggs. While the Phillips show stopped around World War II, there was such a clear divergence in taste that we can be sure that if it had continued, it would not have included Gober, Merz and Ray. Their work is far less interesting than a number of the offbeat offerings at the Phillips, which included a dreamy *Bouquet of Fruit and Flowers* by the pioneering Philadelphia modernist Arthur B. Carles and the tenderly angular *The Dormer Window* by the American Precisionist Niles Spencer.

Some would simply say that the Phillips's taste is conservative while the Modern's taste is progressive and maybe even radical. Those characterizations are not so much true or false as beside the point. Art is not an interpretation of experience; it is experience itself. The Modern has surely given us as many great experiences as any museum in the world, and there were many to be had at "Objects of Desire," no question about it. (And there was lots of weak work in the Phillips show.) Rowell brought an interesting European tilt to her selection of secondary characters. No other curator at the Modern would have included a painting by Alberto Magnelli, a contemporary of Picasso and Braque whose knack for giving a Constructivist pungency to domestic subject matter is scarcely recognized on this side of the Atlantic. But if you removed a few grace notes, you were left with the Modern's progressivist aesthetic, which may have meant a blow against philistinism when the museum opened in 1929, but nowadays just spells conformism.

The museum's view of artistic evolution as violent stylistic change has become the standard history, but this is mostly a testament to the Modern's astonishing power of persuasion (and arm-twisting). The fact is that the seamlessness of the Modern's vision has been

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achieved at quite a price. The museum has been perfectly willing to expurgate the work of even its favorite artists, if they did not always follow the program. Matisse's painting of the 1920s is for all intents and purposes not presented as part of MoMA's permanent collection, because his triumphant reinterpretations of the heritage of Ingres, Delacroix and Renoir suggest a backward glance that is irreconcilable with the museum's fast-forward ethos. There are whole categories of artists, abstract as well as representational, that the Modern will essentially not deal with, because their work violates an orthodox principle of historical determinism. Very little of geometric abstraction after the death of Mondrian is ever on view, since the achievements of Burgoyne Diller, Ilya Bolotowsky and Auguste Herbin and others are seen as retrograde.

"Objects of Desire" tied right into the museum's long-running practice of demonstrating how a traditional theme can be retooled to fit an insistently futuristic program. I found echoes in "Objects of Desire" of two older exhibitions that were devoted to the figure: the international "New Images of Man" in 1959, and, three years later, "Recent Painting USA: The Figure." Back then, many New York artists regarded these shows as having as little to do with figure painting as "Objects of Desire" has been regarded as having to do with still life painting today. Fairfield Porter, who was the art critic for *The Nation* at the time, accused the Museum of Modern Art of turning figures into "monsters of mutilation, death and decay." Sidney Tillim, another painter who was writing first-rate criticism, complained that what was at the Modern contained "very little of what we currently understand as a consistent painting." In the ensuing years, the Modern has shown little interest in consistent painting as a contemporary idea, and as far as mutilation, death and decay are concerned, Rowell went out of her way to include a work by Cindy Sherman, a sort of Gothic-horror still life in which a plate of stew that appears to consist of giant plastic worms is served on a table covered with the drippings from red, yellow and green candles.

Porter's essential complaint about "New Images of Man" holds for Rowell's show as well. He said that "New Images of Man" was less about painting than it was about creating a subject that was "acceptable to critics." The work on view, Porter wrote, "gives an easy subject matter to critical writing, for those paintings and sculptures seem to mean something profound in proportion to the amount of distortion and violence of their appearance." In 1960, the Modern cared less about what was going on in figure painting than it did about making a major statement about the human condition. And now Margit Rowell has used the art of still life as an excuse to present a fashionable polemic about the dehumanizing effects of consumer culture.

Rowell's catalog is so tendentious and so poorly written that some of us who admired her earlier work have been left a little stunned. She is leaden when she means to be upbeat. The works of the Italian Metaphysical painters are referred to as "infinitely modern." Duchamp's Underwood typewriter cover lacks "the typewriter that gives it its nobility of meaning." And Rowell says of some Expressionist still lifes that "a disturbing sense of anxiety is vividly present." Having seen what Rowell does with ordinary English, readers may be reluctant to follow her into the gridlock of academic criticism. "Because the drive or pulsion of desire, in order to be sustained, must be unsatisfied, the objects desired (or the climax of the story) are ever distant or deferred": I admit to quoting out of context, but the context doesn't help very much.

Rowell's thesis is that when modern artists contemplate the still life, they are reflecting our increasingly troubled relations with inanimate objects. It is a postmodern variation on the old woe-to-us-alienated-moderns theme; and if Cindy Sherman's plate of worms or Robert Gober's giant tissue box makes you uncomfortable, well, that's the point. These artists, she tells us, reflect "problematic visions of the world." They pose "challenges" to "the conventions of middle-class private life." I think Rowell is making things rather more complicated than they need to be. Does she mean to say that those of us who prepare something for dinner that happens to look more like a Chardin than a Cindy Sherman or a Robert Gober have succumbed to "the conventions of middle-class private life?" And what if we have? If Margit Rowell wakes up in the morning and has a cup of coffee and a danish, is she a victim of "society's values?" This curator can talk all she wants to about "socioeconomic roles," but the truth is that we are still eating many of the same things that they were eating in the seventeenth century, and why shouldn't those same objects be arranged in compositions to make still life paintings?

Rowell's show is probably going to begin to be forgotten even before it moves to London for the fall. What it leaves behind is a vacuum—the "Objects of Desire" that might have been. A still life show could have been a terrific occasion for the Museum of Modern Art to confront the gaps in its own view, to admit to other possibilities. Rowell might have included Derain's marvelous *Kitchen Table* (1922-24), now in the Orangerie in Paris. The show ought to have focused on Giacometti's great painting of a single apple on a sideboard, from 1937, a signal development in this artist's return to reality. The absence of the later Morandi is a scandal. And what about the work of Jean Hélion, especially his cheerfully metaphysical paintings of ladders piled with hats, umbrellas and mannequin's heads? Louisa Matthiasdottir's recent still lifes, which combine visual opulence and a severity that Rowell could interpret as alienation if she were so disposed, would have left us in the last room with something that can lay claim to rivaling Matisse's still life in the first room. Others will make strong arguments for the inclusion of Rodrigo Moynihan and Avigdor Arikha. There's so much that could have been done. Yet Rowell just went on dicing, looking for more in less. That is what she seems to think Cubism and abstract art are all about—even now, more than a generation after less-is-a-bore became a rallying cry the world over.

This show about what has happened to still life painting certainly has nothing whatsoever to do with what's going on in painting in New York today. But that should surprise no one. By and large, the Modern's record on contemporary American art is a spotty one. Nearly sixty years ago, an organization called the American Abstract Artists, whose members saw themselves with some justification as the heirs of Picasso and Braque, were enraged by the museum's reluctance to show the most daring abstract work that was being done in America. The AAA picketed the Modern and handed out copies of a leaflet that asked "How Modern Is the Museum of Modern Art?" This was signed by fifty-two artists, including David Smith and Ad Reinhardt (who designed the leaflet). Those artists were only the first generation to express dismay at how the conservators of a past that belongs to all of us have used that past to legitimize a particular view of the present. Yet their anger against Barr also probably included an element of respect for the man, who had given New York so much and who (they hoped) could do even better. Nowadays, many artists would assume correctly that such a protest would do no good. The inner workings of a museum such as the Modern have come to seem increasingly impersonal. The Museum of Modern Art is a universe apart.

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Actually, some of the twists in Barr's career at the Modern are still affecting events, all these years later. It's quite a story, even in brief. In 1943, Barr was fired from the directorship by Stephen Clark, then president and chairman of the board, who felt that Barr's taste was too far out. But Barr refused to leave the museum, holed up in the library, and four years later the museum acknowledged his preeminence by establishing what amounted to a bipartite directorship, with the founding director now director of collections. Owing to Barr's extraordinary prestige, what was essentially a curatorial position came to be in many respects the guiding force at the museum, and this brand of curatorial power endured in the years after William Rubin had inherited Barr's mantle.

If the Modern is a museum from which we have come to expect original thinking about twentieth-century art, it is because of the emphasis given to curators, whether Rubin, or Kirk Varnedoe, who took over from Rubin, or John Elderfield, who has continued Barr's involvement with Matisse, or Margit Rowell. Yet the times when those in charge of the collection truly dominated the Modern may finally be coming to an end, as the museum prepares for its second major expansion in as many decades, and reorganizes its vast and variegated forces. The Modern of the next century will most likely have a power structure more like other museums, and curators will certainly be in no position to close the gap between the old modern world that the museum did so much to enshrine and the postmodern universe that they might have enabled us to understand.

The Museum of Modern Art, which had a key role in establishing New York as the world capital of modern art, has spent the past forty years trying to live down accusations that it is not up-to-date. Those accusations have come from every quarter, and they have ranged from legitimate to ludicrous. It's easy to understand why this institution so often feels that it's damned no matter what it does. Basically, the museum's approach is a fossilized futurism, which it attempts to disguise with lots of contemporary flourishes. No wonder, then, that the ten architectural firms that have contributed ideas for the museum's future have, by and large, come up with such airy proposals. A question mark is a natural response to an institution that is wedded to an unchanging ideology of perpetual change.

The ideas that Steven Holl offers are an exception. His work has a welcome clarity, but his beautifully defined watercolors of new galleries filled with natural light were apparently too straightforward for an institution that does not want to admit that it is pinned down. In the end, what the museum builds in the West 50s will have less to do with any architect's ideas than with what has already been built, with competing claims within the museum, and with building codes and budgets. As far as the new Modern is concerned, two things are sure. The director, the trustees and the money managers will be taking an ever larger role. And as time goes by, the collection's essential core of a hundred or so masterpieces—the works by Cézanne, Rousseau, Picasso, Matisse, Brancusi, Mondrian and Klee that people still come from around the world to see—will occupy an ever smaller percentage of the museum's space. The masterpieces are becoming a sideshow. But this is a sideshow that the museum is going to go on squeezing for old-fashioned entertainment value, secure in the knowledge that most everybody who visits New York City will want to take a look at the Incredible Shrinking Classics. •

Crimes and Misdemeanors

BY TONY JUDT

Europe: A History by Norman Davies

(Oxford University Press, 1,365 pp., $39.95)

We are at a watershed in the history (and the historiography) of Europe. Fifty years after World War II, some long-standing assumptions about good and evil in that war and its aftermath are being shaken. Nearly a decade after the fall of communism, the conventional Western understanding of Lenin's place in the history of this century is undergoing serious revision. The end of the European empires and the resurrection of Eastern Europe have dated most general histories of the old continent beyond recovery. The time is ripe for a new perspective, for a genuinely fresh account of how Europe came to its present condition.

A glance at Norman Davies's ambitious new history of the continent, from its geological origins through 1992, seems to promise precisely such a book. It has certainly been welcomed warmly in its country of origin. Widely praised for its scope, its form and its verve, *Europe: A History* was a best-seller in Great Britain, where it was also selected as "Book of the Year" by a variety of historians, journalists and editors. And it is certainly a significant accomplishment to cover 3,000 years of European history in just under 1,400 pages, and to do so in consistently readable prose. Davies's book displays evidence of wide reading and a real enthusiasm for its subject. As a historian of Poland, he promises greater attention to Europe's eastern half and advertises his book as unique among surveys of its kind in precisely this respect. Another distinctive feature of the book is the 300 "capsules" scattered through the text, averaging a page each: these present a brisk, idiosyncratic and easily digestible account of a person, a place, an idea, or an event; and some of them, such as the ones on "Musike" and "St. Gotthard," are entertaining and informative. And there are numerous appendices with the usual array of charts, genealogies and maps.

Yet *Europe: A History* does not fulfill its author's grand ambition. It is not a good work of history at all; and it must not become a work of reference for readers seeking to understand the European past. This is not owing to its minor defects, though these are many. Davies has a cute, self-advertising style that begins to grate; he can be shamelessly self-promoting (even encouraging a comparison of himself to Gibbon); he seems to know little about the history of art or ideas (he is better on music), and even less about economic development; and, despite a long introduction in which he pours scorn on virtually all previous histories and historians for their distorted perspectives, he lacks any guiding vision of his own. There are other minor annoyances: his chapter and capsule titles are often linguistically and referentially obscure, intended more to show off the author's own erudition than to enlighten his readers, while the capsules themselves (which take up a quarter of the text) get in the way of the narrative, to which they are often only loosely related; all of the political

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maps of Europe are pointlessly turned by 90 degrees, such that Portugal appears at the top and Warsaw is always at the very epicenter (the ideology behind the cartography emerges pretty quickly); and the book has an inadequate index and badly organized notes.

Of course, most ambitious general histories have these or comparable flaws. The important delinquencies of Davies's book are much more serious. It falls short of the requirements of a responsible synoptic history; and, in a more serious respect, it is a truly unsavory book.

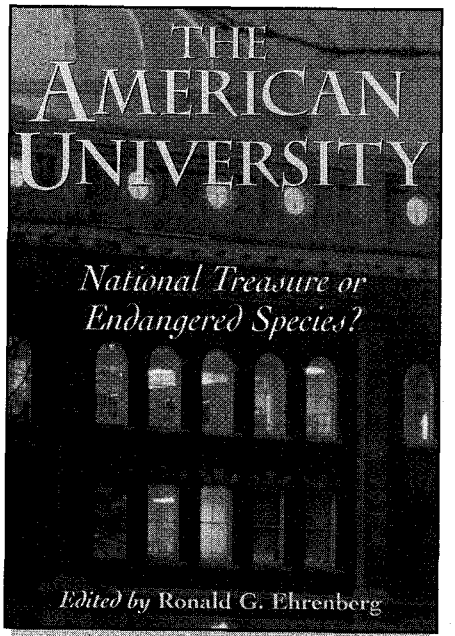
For a start, Davies can't get his facts straight. I don't mean that he gets a few dates and names wrong. I mean that his book is littered with embarrassing and egregious errors of the sort that his own teachers would once have called "schoolboy howlers." In Davies's book, Henry VIII of England and Francis I of France hold a famous meeting on the wrong date, at a time when one of them wasn't even king; the reigns of all but one of the British Tudors are misdated; the Dutch Revolt breaks out on various dates, one of them correct (a misfortune that also befalls the Crimean War three centuries later); and Pascal is described as an "inmate" in Port Royal. In the nineteenth century, among other curiosities, the Second Empire in France begins four years early, the Tolpuddle martyrs in Britain move to another part of the country, and the Franco-Russian Dual Alliance of 1894 changes its name and its date.

As for the twentieth century, which takes up a fifth of the book: the Fascist regimes in Italy and Spain begin on the wrong dates, and in Spain, poor Largo Caballero, the well-meaning Spanish Socialist, becomes the head of the Communist Party; Franz von Papen gets the support of the Nazi deputies in the Reichstag (he didn't) and General von Schleicher becomes a member of the Reichstag (he wasn't); the Germans occupy the Vichy Zone in 1943, a year late; the number of wartime collaborators punished in France and Belgium at the Liberation and after is exaggerated by many thousands; Maurice Schumann changes the spelling of his name, becomes the brother of the hitherto unrelated Robert Schuman (twenty-five years his senior, and whose own name and "Plan" are misspelled in the index), and they are jointly miscredited with founding an important postwar French political party; the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is moved from 1968 to 1963, while Spain and Portugal join the European Community three years early; the British Empire in Africa is said to begin its demise with Nigerian independence in 1951, whereas the first independent state was Ghana in 1957, with Nigeria breaking away only three years later; François Mauriac's famous *bon mot* about liking Germany so much that he preferred two of them is assigned to an unnamed French minister; and the Berlin Wall falls nearly a week late.

These are just some of the mistakes that I spotted on a first reading, and they do not include misinterpretations of texts or events. Others will doubtless have similar misgivings for the periods about which they know more—though many general readers no better versed in classical history than myself will surely share my surprise at finding the precocious Hannibal crossing the Alps a full century before he intended. Davies has even included (on page 865) a childish "deliberate mistake," which would seem a little less foolish were it not overwhelmed by all its undeliberate fellows. The cumulative effect of all these errors is utterly to destroy the reader's confidence in *Europe: A History.*

Then there is the problem of Davies's lack of a sense of proportion. His legitimate frustration at Western ignorance of Eastern Europe is restated ad nauseam, but he himself largely ignores the complicated social and economic context of Eastern Europe's historical backwardness and consequent political weakness. The misfortunes of Europe's eastern half are copiously and lachrymosely displayed, but they are rarely explained. (Though blame is generously assigned, usually elsewhere.) The index, such as it is, reflects this unbalanced, compensatory approach: there are eleven entries for Pilsudski, who thus outranks Charlemagne, Bismarck and most of Europe's other leaders, and three entries for the Polish nationalist demagogue Roman Dmowski, but there are only two for Metternich, one for Freud and none for the three-time French socialist premier Léon Blum.

There is distortion, too, in Davies's language, notably in his unstinting abuse of terms such as "genocide." The French Revolution is described as an occasion for "*genocide franco-français*," an era in which the enemies of the counterrevolutionary Chouans, whose "moral integrity" is a matter of some concern to the author, "did not hesitate to employ genocidal measures." A century and a half later, Nazi policy toward the Poles is classed as similarly "genocidal." This is silly. Instances of the mass murder of counterrevolutionaries in eighteenth-century France normally affected dozens or hundreds of victims



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or, in one notorious case, about 2,000. Robespierre and his colleagues were not proto-Pol Pots, plotting to kill half the French nation. Similarly, the Nazis, as Davies acknowledges, set out to eliminate the educated elite of occupied Poland, not to round up, to imprison and to kill every living Pole. By invoking "genocide" so loosely, Davies fails to discriminate between true attempts at mass extermination (of Armenians, of Jews) in modern times, and equally murderous attacks, but on a significantly smaller scale and with quite different purposes, on various communities and nations—Albigensians, Huguenots, Jews, Irish, Poles and others—over the past centuries. He seems confused about these distinctions, and he will confuse his readers as well.

In one respect, however, Davies goes beyond simply confusing his categories. He has a weakness for inappropriate comparisons and equivalences—he calls them "juxtapositions"—a number of which have to do with the Jews in general and the Holocaust in particular. Actually, Jews receive quite a lot of attention in *Europe: A History,* albeit in odd ways. The capsule called "Batavia," for example, ends for no obvious reason with a reminder that the leading historian of the Dutch Republic, Simon Schama, is a "British scholar of Dutch-Jewish parentage." When this was queried in an American review of his book, Davies responded tetchily that it was no different from reminding people that he, Davies, is a Lancastrian, a remark that can at best be described as disingenuous.

In a paragraph on modern art Kandinsky is described as a Russian exile, and Picasso is described as a Catalan exile, but Marc Chagall is described as a "Jewish exile." (From where?) In a passage on the birth of Christianity, we are authoritatively informed that "notwithstanding the doctrine of forgiveness, it is the hardest thing in the world for Christians and Jews to see themselves as partners in the same tradition. Only the most Christian of Christians can contemplate calling the Jews 'our elder brethren.'" But then, as Davies tells us hundreds of pages later in a paragraph on Jewish emancipation, "modern concern with the roots of anti-Semitism sometimes overlooks the severity of the Jews' own laws of segregation." This is strikingly misleading: after their emancipation, even believing Jews dropped most of these communal requirements. Here, as elsewhere on such matters, Davies is distinctly more Catholic than the Pope.

His "juxtapositions" go further still. In a capsule purportedly devoted to the "Noyades," the deliberate sinking at Nantes of boats filled with Vendéen rebels and their supporters, Davies first implies an exaggerated number of victims ("by the thousand," he writes, when the actual figure was between 2,000 and 2,500) and then moves swiftly to his main purpose. A mere ten lines are given over to the tragic events at Nantes in 1793 (Davies gets the year wrong), and they are followed by one and a half pages on a "juxtaposition" with gas chambers and crematoria. The ostensible point is that each generation invents the technology that it needs to commit mass murder. But the real emphasis is elsewhere. Davies's tone is well captured in the following excerpt: "A view might be entertained that the Nazi gas chambers reflected a 'humanitarian approach,' akin to that of well-regulated abattoirs. If the inmates had to die, it was better that they die quickly rather than in protracted agony or from cold and starvation. In practice, there is ample evidence that the operation of the Nazi death-camps was accompanied by gratuitous bestiality." What are we supposed to infer from this? "A view might be entertained" that, in an appropriately non-gratuitous form, bestiality has its place? A conscientious historian might usefully entertain the view that the killing of Vendéen rebels was an act of terroristic revenge in a civil war. But what light does it cast on the planned extermination of people whose crime was their very existence?

And this capsule is not an aberration. In a later piece, "BATT-101," purportedly devoted to the "ordinary men" in the German police battalions who massacred Jews on the eastern Front, nearly two-thirds of the text is given over to "juxtaposing" these commonplace mass-murderers with a summary of the "crimes" committed by Jewish ghetto policemen and by Jews working for the Communists after the war in the Polish U.B. (Security Office), who in Davies's words engaged in "torture, sadistic beatings and murder." Davies is much less movingly evocative in his description of the German killings of Jews. The scale, the context and the gravity of these crimes are utterly unrelated—as Polish scholars have recently demonstrated, Davies overstates the Jewish presence in the U.B.—but somehow Davies manages to bind them together, with no discussion of the Polish context or of Polish behavior before, during or after the war. This is his conclusion: "In this light, it is difficult to justify the widespread practice whereby the murderers, the victims, and the bystanders of wartime Poland are each neatly identified with specific ethnic groups." (Translation: Germans were not just murderers, but also victims of Jews; and Jews were not just victims, but also murderers and persecutors of Germans and Poles.) Just what the reader is supposed to make of this account is unclear and more than a little disturbing.

Those familiar with Davies's earlier writings will not be surprised to encounter these "juxtapositions" or equivalences. In *God's Playground,* his two-volume history of Poland that appeared in 1982, Davies assured his readers that "Polish hostility towards the Jews was complemented by Jewish hostility towards the Poles." He advised that for students of wartime Poland "to ask why the Poles did little to help the Jews is rather like asking why the Jews did nothing to assist the Poles." In a later article in the journal *Polin,* seeking to demonstrate that Polish-Jewish hostility and fear before World War II was a two-way street—in a country where Jews were just 10 percent of the population!—Davies wrote affectingly of Polish "apprehension" in Eastern Galician towns as the "Betar movement marched its young people around the town square to chants of 'We will conquer Palestine' and 'We're not afraid of Arabs.'" (His descriptions of attacks on Jews in inter-war Poland are less gripping.)

Indeed, a significant part of Davies's career as a historian has been devoted to revealing such equivalences, as in his comparison of the characteristics of Jewish and Polish nationalism, something he once described as "a fruitful line of enquiry." The fruits of that line of enquiry seem to have been sufficient to encourage him to extend it in his latest book to bizarre equivalences between Nazi extermination battalions and the corrupt ventures of small-time ghetto criminals assigned a spurious intra-communal authority on the eve of their programmed extinction.

Recognizing the rather controversial nature of his "juxtapositions," not to mention their insensitive phrasing and their obsession with the persecution of Jews, Davies covers himself in footnote ninety-nine on page 1,168. He invokes an authority for his view that there is nothing wrong in comparing and contrasting the Holocaust with other events. His authority is Isaiah Berlin. Those who refuse such historical comparisons and insist upon the "uniqueness" of the Holocaust have, he says, quoting Berlin, "a political motive." No mean backing, if you can get it. The problem is that Davies never got it. In the text from which Davies is quoting—it is on pages 18 and 19 of *The Unresolved Past: A Debate in German History,* edited by Ralf

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Dahrendorf and published in London in 1990—Berlin says the opposite of what Davies claims that he said.

In the relevant passage, Berlin is very clearly questioning the "political motives" of precisely those who insist upon certain sorts of implausible historical comparisons. Here are his words:

> Obviously, it's sensible to say, if uniqueness of a phenomenon, particularly of a horrifying phenomenon, is examined, we mustn't rush to the conclusion that it's unique in human history before we have compared it to other phenomena which in some ways may resemble it. That is what is being applied to the Holocaust. But think of unique events like the French Revolution. Nobody went about saying, is the French Revolution really unique, does it really resemble the "Glorious Revolution," Cromwell and the Puritans, something which happened in Athens in 405, the Roman Principate, and if so, what political conclusions should be drawn? Even with the Russian Revolution, which some of its makers thought analogous to the French Revolution, you don't come across writings either for or against, trying to emphasize its uniqueness or non-uniqueness, its similarity or dissimilarity to what went on before. Therefore, there must be a good deal more to the question of uniqueness—the "placing in context" of this event than a mere historical assessment of an objective kind. It had a conspicuously political motive.

Only a massively egregious misreading could allow Davies to turn what is a devastating criticism of his own approach into a shield against his critics. I am happy to assume that this error arises merely from his inability to read a text with scholarly care. Still, Berlin is right. This is a politically motivated book. Buyer, beware.

Some of the failings of *Europe: A History* can be attributed to the distinctive personality of its author—"historian, populist and self-styled iconoclast," in the words of one American journalist covering his promotional appearances. (American journalists and interviewers have been quicker than their British counterparts to remark upon Davies's less endearing foibles.) Norman Davies has a history of inattention to accuracy, despite his patronizing criticism of poor Thomas Carlyle in the book's introduction. ("It is important," he observes, against Carlyle's historical writing, "to check and to verify.") A sympathetic reviewer of Davies's first book on the Polish-Soviet War of 1919-1920 wrote in 1973 that "it is hard not to express surprise that this young scholar should include so much inaccurate information," and his two-volume general history of Poland was variously described by otherwise favorable commentators as being "rather bored with detail" (Antony Polonsky) and containing "many faulty transcriptions from Polish and factual errors" (L.R. Lewitter). At the time of Davies's much publicized dispute with Stanford over that institution's refusal to offer him a chair, the university's provost felt constrained to make public some comments from academic referees who described Davies as showing "an inclination to sacrifice exactitude to a well-turned phrase" and wrote of his "occasionally erratic judgments and generalizations" and "the many factual errors which seem to be due to haste."

Davies's desire to shock probably accounts for many of the other irritating features of his new book. In addition to his self-confessed desire to be Gibbon, there is a capsule devoted to the history of Oxford University Press, whose greatest achievements are listed as including Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, *The Book of Common Prayer*, Blackstone's *Commentaries*, *Alice in Wonderland* and ... *God's Playground* by Norman Davies! But there is also an undercurrent of resentment that lapses occasionally into paranoia. Davies's book is sadly disfigured by hints of various scores in need of settlement. After condemning Stanford and other leading North American universities for their inadequate efforts to teach European history, Davies castigates one historian in Cambridge, England for his failure to appreciate the importance of Hungary in the European past: "all this means is that the Magyars did not reach Cambridge." The Oxford medievalist Maurice Keen is ridiculed for the Western orientation of the Pelican History of Medieval Europe that he wrote in 1969. The Oxford Faculty of Modern History is pilloried for its long-standing emphasis upon medieval (Western) texts, and we are told that in Britain "the English majority are apt to perceive all cultural gradients sloping steadily downhill from the Himalayan peaks of Oxford...." By the end of this, and much more in a similar vein, one is put irresistibly in mind of *The Wind in the Willows*, with Mr. Toad barreling boastfully along the open road and singing to himself:

> The Clever Men at Oxford
> Know all that there is to be knowed
> But they none of them know one half as much
> As intelligent Mr Toad.

Mr. Toad's unselfconscious immodesty is nicely captured in Davies's assertion that only East European specialists such as himself truly understand European history as a whole. In an essay published in the *New Statesman* and characteristically titled "How I Conquered Europe," he asserts that "if an all-European history was to be written, it could only be written by one of us." "One of us": this is the point at which Davies's own suspicion of "them" merges with the propensity of many (but by no means all) East Europeans and their historians to see around them cabals, plots and other devices intended to keep "their" part of Europe out of the story of Western civilization. In Davies's resentful words: "Generally speaking, Western Civilisation is not taken to extend to the whole of Europe (although it may be applied to distant parts of the globe far beyond Europe)."

Far from making a valid point here, Davies is actually doing it to death. There has long been a need to recast Western understanding of the European past and present—to treat of the whole continent

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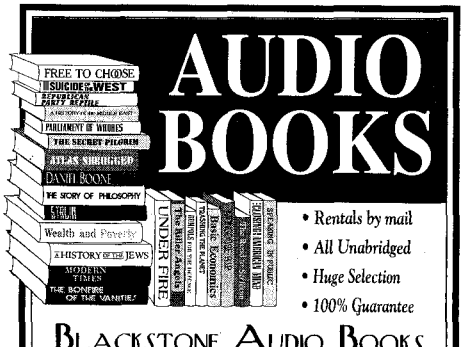

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and not just its more fortunate western regions. But by insisting on the "really vicious quality" of "nearly all" accounts of Western civilization, by blaming "the western imagination" for inventing, say, "the Slav Soul," by echoing the debilitating East European inclination to blame local misfortune upon outside malevolence, and by turning his history of Europe into a propaganda exercise on behalf of eastern applicants to the E.U., Davies goes way beyond the bounds of the historian's vocation.

The same applies to Davies's remarks on Jewish themes. He insists that he is not anti-Semitic and we must take him at his word. He claims that it is simply impossible to write fairly about "Eastern Europe" without raising hackles; and it is undoubtedly true that much of the modern history of Eastern Europe is so problematically intertwined with the history of the Jews that all sorts of sensibilities are on the line every time certain subjects are raised. Still, this does not sufficiently account for Davies's own reaction to criticism. As he once told an American journalist, "things I write about East Europe don't suit various people, especially in America." And which people in America might those people be? His response to Stanford's rejection was to inform its provost that any scholar dealing with East Europe or Poland was "bound to alarm a number of vested interests, among them those of international Zionism or communism."

Well, that is pretty clear. In *God's Playground*, indeed, the reader is told that "it has always lain in the interests of the Zionist movement ... to paint Polish life in the most unfavourable colours." In *Europe: A History*, we learn that Marek Edelman (a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto revolt who has chosen to remain in Poland) is "pilloried" for "opposing the dominant Zionist viewpoint" on the Holocaust. (This is not the first time that the unfortunate Edelman has been pressed into involuntary service as an ally of Davies, sometimes at the price of a subtle shift in the meaning of his own words.)

It seems reasonable to infer, then, that Davies is simply anti-Zionist. Anti-Zionism, of course, is quite distinct from anti-Semitism—though in the context of post-1948 East European usage, with which Davies is proudly familiar, such a distinction has often been shorn of its difference. It is most unfortunate, therefore, that the section on the Holocaust in *Europe: A History* refers readers to footnotes in which the so-called "revisionists" are given equal space with legitimate scholars. In a book intended for the general reader, this is astonishing. In one of these footnotes, one source for Davies's criticism of the "Holocaust industry" turns out to be *They Dare To Speak Out* by Paul Findley, an overheated and quite unrelated diatribe against the role of the "Israel lobby" in American politics written by an ex-congressman with a grudge.

Meanwhile, in an interview with the *Daily Telegraph* in London last December, Davies was asked to account for the distinctly unfavorable review of his book by Theodore Rabb in *The New York Times Book Review*, which stood in marked contrast to its glutinously fawning reception in Britain. He offered various explanations, none of them about a professional historian's concern for accuracy, balance and so forth. Instead, he asserted that "Rabb is putting out a few signals to his comrades-in-arms that there is a Jewish issue in the Europe book—although of course he won't say it." This is especially curious, given that Davies's treatment of this subject was accorded just two sentences in the review. The ever-vigilant Davies thus accounts for the entirety of Rabb's criticism on this flimsy basis. And who are those "comrades-in-arms?" Elders, perhaps?

In fact, Davies is neither anti-Semitic, nor anti-Zionist, nor even pro-East European. He is merely pro-Polish. *This* is the key to the man, to the book, to the controversy. As he joked with an admiring audience in Chicago, *Europe: A History* was an attempt "to write another history of Poland in disguise." It is surely no accident that the only ruler since Charlemagne to get the capsule treatment in Davies's new book is a Pole. The book's obsessions and resentments and emphases are Polish: "East Europe" is, in this sense, a façade. Thus Tomas Masaryk, the creator of Czechoslovakia, gets no entries in the index, and the formerly Polish provincial city of Lvov not only has more index entries than Manchester, Milan and Marseille combined, but also more than Budapest, Bratislava, Bucharest and Belgrade put together.

Davies's Polonophilia accounts for the sour tone and the historical inadequacy of his description of the Enlightened Monarchies (they partitioned the lamented Polish-Lithuanian Republic), the Jews (they abandoned Poland) and the West since 1939 (it, too, abandoned Poland); and for the distorted, prejudiced version of Russian history from Peter I to Gorbachev as it is here presented. A capsule on "Pogroms" is inserted in this book solely for the purpose of excusing Poles from responsibility for a murderous riot in Lemberg (Lvov) in 1918. And Poland is given most of the credit for ending the cold war, to which end the international history and arms treaties of the 1980s are grotesquely mishandled. The self-pitying *ressentiment* of the "long-suffering author," as Davies has taken to describing himself, is perhaps a reflection of Poland's own sometime self-image as the sorely victimized "Christ of nations."

Davies's treatment of Russia and the Soviet Union is the most mischievous of all, and should alone disqualify the book as serious history. It is presented here as a counterpoint to what Davies darkly labels the "Allied Scheme of History." The latter, which has apparently dominated all Western scholarship since 1941, has a "demonological fascination" with Germany, is indulgent of Russia, is obsessed with the Atlantic community, and is uncaring and ignorant of Europe's eastern half. Once again, Davies goes so far over the top as to hit the wrong target altogether. To be sure, Yalta (or its aftermath) was a deal done over the heads of helpless victims (though a historian should tell the reader why this happened and what alternatives were available to Western policymakers at the time); and scholars and writers in the United States and Britain have sometimes been ignorant of the crimes and the complexities of the recent past in the lands east of Vienna. But the notion that Stalin's crimes are unknown or undiscussed is ridiculous. And how does Davies propose to redress the balance by claiming that "half a century after that war [World War II] was fought, the majority of episodes which contradict the Allied myth continue to be minimized or discounted?"

Davies has two lessons to teach. The first is that Russian history since the seventeenth century is one long aggressive enterprise directed, mostly, at Poles. The Russian czars made deals with Prussia and Austria to destroy the Polish-Lithuanian Republic (1772-1795); they seized Polish land and they exiled Polish martyrs. They were responsible for the emergence of radical Zionism among Lithuanian Jews ("Littwaks"), who then came to Poland and upset the comity of Poles and Jews, with Poles being unfairly blamed for the subsequent upsurge in local anti-Semitism. The czars' Soviet successors made a deal with Germany once again (in 1939) to destroy Poland, after which Russians exiled Poles, massacred Polish officers (in Katyn) and yet again sent in disruptive Jews, this time as Communist policemen, causing renewed and understandable offense to Poles with unfortunate postwar local results (for the Jews). And nobody in the West knows or cares.

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The second lesson seems to be that, as a consequence of our failure to see Russia straight, we have been unfair to Germany and to other enemies of Russia. Hence our obsession with the Holocaust, which was perpetrated by Germans, and our ignorance of Polish suffering, which came at least as much at Russian hands as at German hands and lasted for half a century. Davies even comes close to defending the actions of "Slovaks, Croats and Baltic nations" in the Second World War: they "were thought [sic!] to have rejected the friends of the West or to have collaborated with the enemy." The Allied bombing of Dresden in February 1945 gets its own capsule, naturally; but with a special twist. The bombing is presented as a response to a Soviet request for air support, and the German victims are described as "hundreds of thousands of refugees displaced by the Soviet advance." Thus the raid on Dresden becomes a form of Allied complicity in a Soviet-sponsored criminal undertaking. Predictably, perhaps, there is a footnote that refers to David Irving.

A capsule on the Carpathian city of Czernowitz is the occasion for Davies to bemoan Soviet responsibility for the reduction of "rich layers of local Jewish, Romanian, Polish and Ruthenian life ... [to] a drab provincial backwater of Ukraine." There is no mention of the rather prominent role of the Nazis in expediting that reduction by destroying the single largest element in the communal mix. Finally, and with a thoroughly irresponsible insouciance, Davies inserts in his main text the suggestion by James Bacque that the United States, by means of studied neglect and worse, deliberately allowed German prisoners of war to die in very large numbers after 1945. Only those readers who find their way to footnote four on page 1,170 will learn that this thesis has been "vehemently contested" by credible historians. Actually, it has been thoroughly discredited, and its author with it. Maybe Davies doesn't know that.

Léon Blum once called the French Communists a "foreign national party." Norman Davies is a foreign national historian. He has "gone native," and has taken upon himself the prejudices characteristic of some of his adopted compatriots. His case is not unique. Keith Hitchins, the American author of the recently published *Oxford History of Romania,* is another such historian, and his book, too, is largely vitiated by being written from within the assumptions of a certain popular version of the local national story.

Such total identification with one's subject is surely not a necessary condition of close, empathetic scholarship. The late Richard Cobb, the Oxford-based historian of the French Revolution, understood very well that his immersion in France constituted, as he put it in one of his books, a "Second Identity"—and for scholarly purposes he always reverted to his first one. Moreover, Cobb worked steadily against the flow of contemporary French prejudices; his life's work was a standing refutation of the dominant national-revolutionary myth of modern France. The late A.J.P. Taylor, another great British iconoclastic historian, and one whom Davies admires, constitutes a similar counterexample to Davies's own misunderstanding of historical method. Taylor, too, made a career of shocking his fellow scholars and rubbing conventional opinion the wrong way. But he was meticulous with the facts; and he wrote against the grain of his own prejudices. Taylor cordially disliked Germany, but his most controversial book, *The Origins of the Second World War,* is a brilliantly misconceived attempt to relieve Hitler of responsibility for World War II. The idea that one might produce better history by setting oneself in opposition to national clichés and national consolations seems never to have occurred to Norman Davies, for all his easy shots at the "Allied Scheme."

Why, then, was this book received with such acclaim in Britain? (It took some time for the more considered responses to come in.) To be sure, British academic reviewers noted some of its shortcomings, but almost without exception they concluded that, notwithstanding its "indulgence towards ... wartime Axis collaborators" (Michael Burleigh), its "embarrassing number of errors" (Adam Roberts), the "callous impression" left by its juxtapositions (Neal Ascherson), its "gobbets of journalistic erudition" (Felipe Fernandez-Armesto) and its "self-indulgence" (Timothy Blanning and Raymond Carr), it is a great work of history. Few reviewers questioned the claims that Davies advances on his own behalf or the use that he makes of his sources.

One answer might be that British book-reviewing, once so acerbic and unforgiving, has had its teeth drawn by the recently inaugurated system of centralized academic appraisal, whereby points (and money) are given to universities according to the achievements of their faculty as assessed by outsiders. Until this year Norman Davies was a senior professor at London University, and the habit of being nice to powerful colleagues in the hope that they will return the favor when it comes time for peer review may have permeated, however unconsciously, the mental dispositions of his reviewers. Whether or not this is so, it cannot explain why Professor Blanning of Cambridge University should have felt constrained in the *TLS* (under the heading "Gibbon Goes East") to restrict his comments on Davies's insensitive "juxtapositions" to the disturbing remark that "great will be the offence taken in certain quarters at certain passages." This is a disgraceful dodge. Either Davies's passages are offensive, in which case Blanning should say so and draw the appropriate conclusions; or they are not offensive, in which case we must conclude that our ethical and scholarly sensibilities in such matters are bounded by ethnic or religious allegiances. This is a glib multiculturalist excuse for an abdication of critical responsibility, and one does not expect to come across it in such quarters.

Another explanation might be sought in the remarkable publicity campaign conducted on behalf of this book. The urge to console themselves for Britain's shrunken international status may account for a *London Times* editorial promoting Davies's book with the headline "A GREAT NEW WORK BY A GREAT BRITISH SCHOLAR," or for Noel Malcolm's hymn of praise in the London *Sunday Telegraph* to the "vitality of our historical writing..., surely the most extraordinary unsung glory of contemporary British cultural life." Still, journalists in London were rounded up not just to praise Davies, but also to cast into the outer darkness all competitors. One reviewer, in London's *Daily Telegraph,* sneered at recent histories of Europe by John Merriman and John Roberts as " 'meaner beauties of the night' when set against the moon that is Professor Davies." Another reviewer, in *History Today,* dismissed Davies's errors as "inattention to detail," while condemning for its mistakes of fact a work by the French historian Marc Ferro, concluding sniffily of the latter: "In areas where the reader is unsure of the facts in advance, it is impossible to trust the author." Two weights, two measures.

In the *London Review of Books,* Neal Ascherson, whom Davies elsewhere calls a "fellow spirit" (that is, another besieged admirer of Eastern Europe), invoked the Stanford affair while pompously advising British readers that they were "entitled to know something of the background" to any American criticism of Norman Davies. And a London columnist named Anne Applebaum used her own review as an occasion to attack the "spouters of clichés" who seek to silence Davies for questioning the "Allied Scheme of History"—that "Scheme" which "makes anyone like Norman

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Davies, who has devoted his career to those nasty East Europeans, seem somewhat suspect." Applebaum has actually reviewed Davies's book three times, and with each review her aggression toward the "enemies" of Davies seems to grow fiercer. There is even an ominous threat: "If the spouters of clichés win this round as well, *Europe: A History*" may be the last book "as enjoyable as this" to appear in the U.S. (Like Davies, she blames Oxford University Press for the book's mistakes. She even manages the distinctly unpleasant suggestion that they are really all the consequence of the Press's decision to have the book copy-edited in India. American readers can get a flavor of Applebaum's innuendoes in the May issue of *The New Criterion.*)

It is a melancholy reflection on the culture as a whole that it is so desperate to find a "flagship" historian, a "great British scholar," that it should have fallen over itself to overlook his factual, methodological and interpretative failings, to forgive him his unfortunate locutions, and to take at face value Davies's own account of the qualities of his book. For *Europe: A History* is not just full of error, disproportion, prejudice, resentment and boastfulness. It is also strikingly conventional. Finally this is just another old-fashioned kings-and-wars history of Europe, with an unusually large number of Polish examples. If you want something original, you should look elsewhere. And if you want a conventional history of Europe, there are better ones out there (including the work of the much-maligned John Roberts, whose *History of Europe* is about to be published here by Viking). They are not marred by academic squabbles and geopolitical grudges, and they get the facts right, too.

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The Scandal of Certainty

BY MICHAEL IGNATIEFF

Fools, Martyrs, Traitors: The Story of Martyrdom in the Western World by Lacey Baldwin Smith

(Knopf, 429 pp., $30)

In the Western tradition, martyrdom has always served to connect the idea of truth with the idea of death. It was Socrates who first bequeathed the idea that the ultimate test of a proposition's truth is our willingness to die for it. While his example still inspires, his idea—that truth and death are linked—now seems perplexing. Truth has become too contestable to die for, and the certainty and faith which martyrdom demands have become positively exotic.

This exoticism makes martyrs interesting, but it makes it difficult for us to enter into their mental world. The fact is that while we admire our martyrs, most of them died for a version of the truth radically different from our own. We can only imagine the idea of laying down our lives so that others may be free to construe the truth as they wish. But most of the martyrs in our tradition died not for the tolerance of many truths, but for a truth that they believed could not be other than it was.

Thinking about martyrs also confronts us with what Flaubert called the incorrigibly bourgeois character of modern moral evaluations. We have turned family values into a synonym for values *tout court.* So to us the martyrs' willingness to sacrifice hearth and home to the demands of truth looks like pathological selfishness. There is an inhuman chill to Jesus's injunction in Luke 14:26: "If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters ... he cannot be my disciple." Yet this was the inversion of values by which the Christian martyrs believed they must live. As they mount their funeral pyres and brave the flames, we can call them sado-masochists or monsters of self-righteousness if we wish, but in the end we are only seeking to deflect the force of their example. For they do compel us to ask why we place family values ahead of principle, why self-sacrifice has become the most distrusted of moral gestures.

Martyrs also make us think again about modern styles of self-deprecation. We take it for granted that it does not pay to take yourself too seriously. The modern moral style is ironic, and irony is valued because it keeps us from going to extremes. Martyrs make a virtue of going to extremes, taking yourself so seriously that you are prepared to lose your life for the sake of a principle. Our ideas of identity are connected to reflexivity: to having thoughts, mostly skeptical, about our thoughts. For a martyr, identity is not reflexive. Finding yourself means throwing yourself so utterly into a cause that the self is suffused with what it believes. The martyrs in our past make us uncomfortable because they put our ironic standpoint into question. They make us wonder whether irony will be the death of principle. They make us ask why we never dare to take ourselves more seriously.

While we admire martyrs, we also resent and fear them, too. Fearless people are themselves fearful. They affect a superiority to pain that we find appalling and infuriating. Hence, perhaps, the fury visited on martyrs' bodies: throughout history they have not only been put to death, but tortured and abused in an attempt, usually vain, to secure their recantation. It is as if the rest of us, in whose name they are tortured, envy and resent their imperviousness, their refusal to be like us, ashamed and self-deprecating captives to the terrors of the body.

In all these ways, then, martyrdom continues to be a scandal. Since most of us are not made of stern stuff, since most of us believe—for good reason—in the bourgeois virtues, it is not easy for us to think clearly about the nature of this scandal. The sheer suffering that martyrs have endured makes it all too easy to believe that anyone willing to die for what he or she believes has to be crazy or fanatical or inhumanly impervious to the claims of kith and kin. Many people who do die for the truth—Osip Mandelstam dying in Magadan, simply because he was a poet—were neither crazy, fanatical nor inhuman. They were merely courageous and unlucky.

Lacey Baldwin Smith has thought hard about the moral challenge presented by the martyr tradition. He is a historian of Tudor and Stuart England, and the core of his thought-provoking book is a study of the English martyr tradition—Thomas à Becket, Thomas More and the Protestant martyrs put to death by Queen Mary in the 1550s. But he ranges over the entire Western tradition, from Socrates to Gandhi and beyond, asking, for example, whether Julius and Ethel Rosenberg deserve to be regarded as martyrs, traitors, or just plain fools.

The word "martyr" derives from the

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Greek word for "witness" and the Anglo-Saxon word for "memory." Martyrs are death-artists, manipulating their own mortality to achieve immortality. All martyrdom is self-proclaimed: myth-making is integral to the martyr's passion to order and control posterity. A history of martyrdom, therefore, has to be a struggle against myth, to recover the historical individual from the haloed portrait. Smith has scraped a good deal of gold leaf off the martyr's halo and takes us back, insofar as this is possible, to the quivering and uncertain historical figures martyrs once were. He respects their astonishing bravery while remaining resolutely unimpressed by their myth-making. He also avoids the temptation to pin martyrs into the butterfly collection of modern psychopathology. As a historian of religion, he is able to treat belief on its own terms, rather than as a symptom. For all these reasons, *Fools, Martyrs, Traitors* is a fine book: vivid, argumentative, compassionate and highly intelligent. It is also full of judgments, and I wonder whether its standards of judgment—its up-to-date, family-centered values—are relevant to the analysis of the martyrological tradition.

Smith is certainly aware of the immense distance separating us from the martyrs whom he brings to life. He helps us re-enter the vanished world of doctrinal certainty, showing us what it would have been like to be so confident of salvation that one would risk the lions or the rack. With the aid of early third-century sources, he examines the life of Vibia Perpetua, a 22-year-old Carthaginian, who went to her death as a Christian martyr in March, AD 203. Her own narrative of her conversion and persecution later came to be known as the *Passion of Saint Perpetua.* Christianity appealed to the Perpetuas of late antiquity because it assuaged their inner turmoil and licensed their turning away from the increasingly hollow rituals of pagan civic piety. But this challenge to the civic virtues—to the virtues of family, city and empire—roused the persecutorial ire of the authorities. With the imperial system rotting at its core, and barbarians beginning to nibble away at its extremities, pagan Carthaginians would have taken it as axiomatic, in Cicero's words, that "the disappearance of piety towards the gods will entail the disappearance of loyalty and social union among men."

Martyrs tend to make their appearance in societies threatened from without or divided within. Perpetua adopted Christianity to sustain a rebellion against the authority of the classical household, and her willingness to die epitomizes the classical world's weakening hold on her generation. It took less than a month in AD 203 for her "to bend a 'course towards the truth and seek after Him who is our real Father, thrusting away custom as some deadly drug.'" Her social prominence guaranteed her arrest. In prison her father visited her, entreating her to abjure. "Give up your pride!" she reports him as having cried. "You will destroy all of us! None of us will ever be able to speak freely again if anything happens to you." Even when he threw himself at her feet, she remained unshaken. We do not know whether he witnessed her end in the arena in Carthage: she was mauled by animals and yet remained sufficiently alert, even *in extremis*, to guide the sword sent to dispatch her with her own hand.

Smith's account of Perpetua's astounding self-possession, and her refusal to be swayed by the entreaties of her father, is riveting. The problem is that he judges her from a censoriously modern standpoint, condemning Perpetua for treating her father with a "selfishness and cruelty that is deeply disturbing." But hadn't Jesus explicitly told her that she should forswear the lure of family love for his sake? The most worrisome question, Smith goes on, is whether Perpetua's willingness to sacrifice herself and her family was "inspired by love of self or love of God." Why are we required to decide whether her motives were pure? Smith is eager to convict most martyrs of selfishness, but they knew only too well that their motives were never pure, which is why Thomas à Becket and Thomas More wore hairshirts in the first place. Instead of condemning Perpetua for selfishness, Smith might have made the more interesting point that the certainties of contemporary bourgeois ethics simply break apart when applied to the feverish priorities of martyrdom.

Smith is similarly judgmental about Socrates, who shooed his weeping wife away and refused to send his children consoling messages before taking the hemlock. Smith also condemns him for the unbecoming theatricality of his own demise. His last words—instructing the tearful Crito to pay a debt to the Greek god of medicine—are, in Smith's opinion, "dreadfully stagey," as if it is unbecoming for a man in his hour of death to make a scene. Staging his death gave point to the whole dire exercise; it may have been the only way that he could have endured it. It is incoherent for Smith to claim that the "ultimate purpose" of Socrates's death "never comes through." No death has had a more resonant impact on our idea of truth or on our view of what stoical self-command can achieve. And so it was intended.

Smith argues that while Socrates certainly did not deserve to die, his perse-

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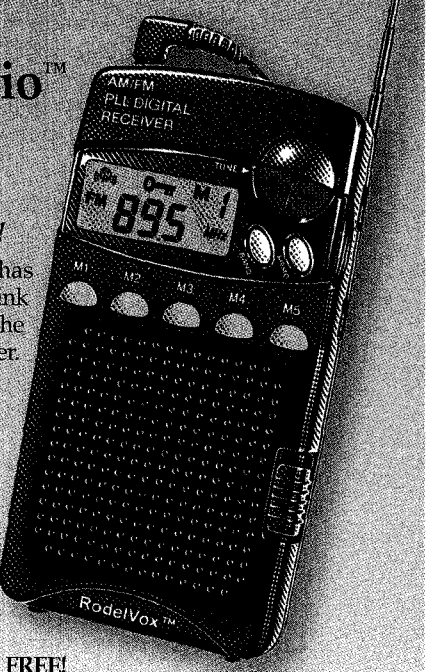

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cutors were not wrong in thinking his skepticism corrosively destructive of social order: "Socrates may not have corrupted young minds, but as a consequence of his constant prying into false premises, he may inadvertently have helped to strip from his pupils' personalities those muddled and contradictory instincts that tend to fetter unbridled egotism and keep under control the temptation to impose self-perceived truths on others." Socrates's Athenian accusers could not have put this better. His skepticism and his courage remain just as much of a scandal in our day as they were in his day.

Jesus was likewise a martyr to corrosive and unsettling truth. But in his case, the corrosion was to his own disciples' faith. His sayings were hard: they had to leave behind their family and the known landmarks of Jewish observance, and follow a ragged prophet whose chief claim—that he was the son of God—did not always appear persuasive. Smith, at least, is not persuaded; and he treats Jesus throughout as an entirely human figure and therefore as a self-chosen martyr. Of course, this is hardly how Jesus (and the tradition that was created in his name) saw himself. But Smith's point is that if Jesus's career is seen in strictly human terms, it conforms to one of the central themes of the Western tradition: that those who die as martyrs tend, whether by intent or indirection, to engineer their own destruction. Jesus quickly realized that his teachings were falling on barren ground. His disciples were a "faithless generation," he shouted. "How long am I to bear with you?" When he discovered that not even his own disciples were able to follow where he led, Jesus decided to court martyrdom. "In effect," writes Smith, "he got himself executed." He rode into Jerusalem during the Passover and let the people hail him as the new Messiah; he threw the money changers out of the Temple, deliberately provoking the Sanhedrin that ran Jerusalem under the watchful eye of the Roman governor. When arrested, tried and placed upon the Cross, Jesus "alone was in control of proceedings." He staged his own death and set the pattern for Christian martyrdom ever since. Like Socrates, he forced into Western awareness the idea that the most dramatic way to vindicate a proposition is to die in its defense. It would be beside the point to observe that vindication and proof are not the same thing. Dying for something proves the sincerity of the believer, not the truth of what they profess to believe. Martyrdom is theater which passes as proof.

Once Jesus had shown that it was more effective to die for a proposition than merely to profess it, a terrible new power was unleashed on the world. Those who are prepared to die for what they believe are beyond the reach of human sanction. Their imperviousness, besides making them intractable subjects, gives them a political leverage out of all proportion to their numbers. Smith makes a persuasive case that the Marian martyrs—the 288 Protestant believers sent to the stake during Mary's attempt to re-impose Catholicism in England between 1553 and 1556—saved Protestantism in the English-speaking world. Protestant belief had been devastated by the premature death of the "godly imp," Edward VI, in 1553; and most of the country was prepared to knuckle under. But the Marian martyrs managed adroitly to exploit their own persecution, publishing accounts of their suffering in prison, making sure these were circulated among the faithful and then dying in the flames with such awesome, if stage-managed, composure that their example rallied and renewed the faith. A heroic martyrology ensured that when Mary died, Protestantism would return as the state church.

Likewise, the monarchical martyr

My Sister, the Queen

Walking the broad allée past Kensington Palace,
more like a country house, really, than a palace,
where a young Queen Victoria
presides gracefully in stone over royal lawns
sweeping down to the distant mockery
of Henry Moore's giant marble thighbones,

I half-expect to see at an upper window
a familiar figure looking out,
the once-pretty face tear- and mascara-stained,
whisky glass in hand, chain-smoking the cigarettes
forbidden her since the operation.

For a modern Queen, there are more ways than one
to keep a prettier, wilder sister under control
besides locking her in the Tower,
and this one did not hesitate to use her power
to prevent her from marrying
a divorced man, and a commoner to boot,
forcing on her, instead, a loveless marriage
that ended, like a slap in the royal face,
in divorce.

This may be the time, though, when threats
no longer silence her, and I imagine I see
the wretched Princess at the window,
her glass empty and with nothing more to lose,
throwing open the sash and screaming to the world
how her sister has ruined her life.

But just as she is about to hurl herself out,
experienced hands grab her from behind
to clamp over the twisted, hysterical mouth,
and drag her, struggling like a wounded moth,
back inside, where the doctor
waits with the hypodermic,

and as the window slams shut again,
and the heavy drapes, embroidered by the hands
of her sister, the Queen, are drawn,
I blink away the vision
and continue my walk
through the unearthly gardens.

Edward Field

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Charles I, executed in high style in front of the Banqueting Hall in 1649, managed the almost impossible feat of securing the future of the monarchy for his son in the very act of losing his own head. He had been a pig-headed and unimpressive king in life, but the manner of his dying—his ironical composure, evident piety and courageous defense of royal prerogative—restored the magical aura of an institution which, until the moment of his execution, seemed fated to succumb to the republican tide.

Saving your cause by laying down your life need not preclude taking some other people's lives with you. The line between martyr and terrorist is thin. John Brown, whose abortive raid on Harper's Ferry helped to provoke the South into an attack which would drag the North into the Civil War, died a martyr to the anti-slavery cause on a Virginia gallows in 1859. Two years later, Union troops crossed into Virginia singing "John Brown's body lies a-molderin' in the grave, but his soul goes marching on." Brown purchased this immortality not merely at the price of his own life, but at the price of all those he so callously led to destruction at Harper's Ferry. Even before Harper's Ferry, Brown had ridden through Kansas and Missouri, killing pro-slavery settlers in cold blood. Brown's sadistic self-righteousness makes the valuable point that martyrs often disgrace good causes with evil methods. In Brown's case, the martyr's pathological indifference to the lives of others seems to have derived from an abnormal contempt for his own.

If martyrs are a study in the power, but also the destructiveness, of intense forms of self-belief, the question is whether there is something inhuman about the martyr personality. While Brown was clearly a fanatic, Smith is at pains to show that the martyr need not be fanatical. Smith discusses two martyrs—Thomas More and Mahatma Gandhi—who seemed recognizably complete human beings, awake to the ironies of their own self-belief. More went to the stake only after seeking every possible way to reconcile conscience with expediency. He was also fully aware of what his martyrdom was costing those he loved. He seems a very human and worldly figure, and his irony and self-doubt make his courage all the more likable, though we turn him into a liberal saint at the price of neglecting that the proposition he died for—the Church's right to refuse Henry VIII's annulment of his marriage—is hardly a liberal truth.

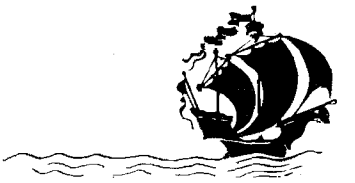
Gandhi, the other likable and unwilling martyr in Smith's story, is appealing because he was so keenly wary of the terrible power that his own willingness to die placed in his hands. He was ruthless in his use of hunger strikes, but he was scrupulous not to tempt others into martyrdom. This sense of the extent of his power made him a responsible leader; it led him to call off hunger strikes and forms of civil disobedience that risked getting out of control or placing his followers in jeopardy.

Gandhi's subtle and skillful courtship of martyrdom was a politically effective weapon only because the Raj was ruled by an isolated and discouraged imperial elite that was responsive to pressure. If martyrdom has become steadily less effective in the twentieth century, as a style of moral witness and as a form of political pressure, it is because new regimes have arisen which are indifferent to the moral scruples which form the tacit contract between martyr and persecutor. Gandhi, for example, counselled the Jews of Europe to embrace martyrdom in order to bring the Nazi regime to its senses. He urged them to embark on a "truly religious resistance ... against the godless fury of dehumanized man." What he could not fathom was a regime explicitly bent on destroying the moral contract between the state and its opponents upon which all martyrdom depends for its effect. Jews underwent martyrdom to no avail. Pastor Bonhoeffer sought to make his own death a rallying point for Christian opponents of the regime, but he misjudged the totalitarian state's capacity to bury its martyrs without a trace. He died in a concentration camp in 1945, his example known to only a handful.

If truth has become relative, if family values have triumphed, and if the modern state has become too cunning and too ruthless to allow martyrs to trouble its hegemony, the end of the martyr tradition in our culture may be at hand. And yet such a conclusion seems both premature and pessimistic. Smith's account may have been intended to strip away the haloes around our martyrs' heads, but the effect is simply to make them more human. And since they seem more human, the tradition that they represent seems less like an austere and impossible exercise in fanaticism and more like something the rest of us could admire, and if we had to, emulate. The noble few who value their lives so little continue to inspire the rest of us, even when they make us suspect that we may value our own lives too much.

MICHAEL IGNATIEFF is working on a history of the moral imagination in the twentieth century.

MOVING?



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WASHINGTON DIARIST

The princess bride

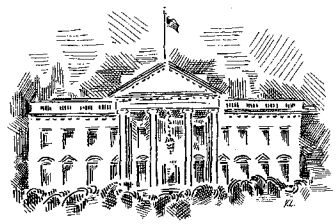
"I FELT I WAS THE LAMB TO THE slaughter," Diana Spencer told a friend the night before her wedding in 1981, according to the journalist Andrew Morton. I suppose this imagery is unavoidable now, as one thinks of that frail and bloody body gasping for oxygen in a Paris tunnel. But it is also, surely, the deepest truth about Diana, and the central reason for the startling grief of the last week. Diana's life followed a sacrificial trajectory. She was offered up to the twin gods of monarchy and celebrity. They made for a brutal combination.

DIANA WAS JUST 19 YEARS OLD when she was corralled into the royal family, blithely unaware of her role in an ancient cycle of dynastic realpolitik. It is now a commonplace that there is no mystery left to royalty, but this profound secret—of the manipulation by Charles and the Queen of a young girl for the propagation of the royal species—was known only to a tiny few at the time. Reasons of state demanded it. "I am not a political figure," Diana insisted in one of her charitable speeches, but, of course, she was. The monarchy's pretense to be apolitical is in itself a shrewd political stance; and without the connection to monarchy Diana would have been an unknown debutante in a minor aristocratic family. The Crown needed an heir; and it needed a boost. Diana gave them more than they bargained for.

FROM THE BEGINNING, SHE REPresented a mixed blessing to the Palace. The post-abdication monarchy's game plan was, in Weberian terms, to depend on traditional authority to defend its power. After Edward VIII, it was clear that any other strategy was as volatile as it was unconstitutional. So the stuttering George VI and canny Queen Mother improvised a monarchical banality in the 1940s; and the bland and dowdy Elizabeth, so much her father's daughter, made passivity her *modus operandi*. Diana's impeccable lineage, her sublime Englishness, her coy reticence, seemed perfect for the continuance of this strategy. But the Crown made a fatal misjudgment. What it did not reckon on was Diana's charismatic power, her gift to mesmerize and captivate, to tap into the iconic strength of monarchy itself, to revive a royal tradition as deep as it is explosive.

YOU COULD SEE IT IN THAT FIRST, famous photo. The young kindergarten teacher in the English garden, cradling an infant as the evening sunlight caught her hair and bestowed almost a halo on the new royal persona. And also a sexuality: the light lit through her dress, outlining a lithe, virginal form. Perhaps no royal member since Elizabeth I created a regal iconography of such sensual power, or subliminally trapped us into an enduring fascination with her glamour.

IN THE COUNTRY THAT WAS ONCE a center of Marian devotion, the combination of female sanctity and male authority has always been a potent brew. Victoria tapped it; Thatcher rode it; but Diana brought raw physical beauty into the mix, transforming the monarchy instantly into a global, fully modern phenomenon. From the moment that became clear, it was also clear that Diana's version of the monarchy was in direct conflict with the Windsors'. She threatened the twentieth-century monarchy at its foundation, supplanting the passivity that was its essential protective coloring with an electric and overpowering aura. Where the Queen stuffily sought international power through the archaic and faintly comic contraption of the Commonwealth, Diana instantly commanded it through the new global media. She began to wield a power that could only further marginalize an already weakened institution.



SO THE WINDSORS SET OUT TO DEstroy her. It is hard to know when she first intuited this; and the knowledge must have been confused with her anger at her cold, adulterous husband. But she did come to see the dynamic clearly in time, and became, as Tina Brown put it, the mouse that roared. Where the Windsors were provincial, stiff and withdrawn, Diana was cosmopolitan, tactile and ubiquitous. Where they understood the traditional notions of reticence, hypocrisy and façade, Diana lived and breathed the modern air of authenticity, honesty and confession. Falteringly, but unmistakably, she grew to understand her own power and her own charm, and took greater and greater risks in expressing them. The unassuming English rosebud slowly unfolded into an Oprahfied, American bloom. In recent months, she had moved even further: royal but without the restraints of royalty, she touched the boundaries of policy, fusing popular culture with a political edge that came close to redefining monarchy. The contrast with the introverted, neurotic Charles, fretting over old flames and old buildings, was yawning.

BUT, AS ELIZABETH II MUST HAVE reflected, the Diana strategy carried enormous risks. The constitutional demands of monarchy were one thing; the price of celebrity another. Between them, Diana was subject to intolerable pressure. Her strength was that the press and the Crown desperately needed—as well as envied—her. Her weakness was that she was a human being, who actually needed love and comfort and family, and who was made, by the hounding of the media and indifference of the royals, increasingly desperate. Her solution, a post-monarchical, post-national celebrityhood, was an ingenious one. Part of the tragedy of her death, I think, is that we will never see whether it could finally have worked. And whether it could have revived the monarchy, or finally proved its superfluity.

HER FUNERAL, IN ITS MAJESTY AND scale and aura, will be contrasted most clearly with Churchill's. The British have not felt such grief since. But with Churchill, the funeral was in some ways a burial of the past, a final farewell to the nineteenth-century giant who saved the country in the twentieth. Diana cannot, of course, compare to Churchill. But her young death points in exactly the opposite direction and is therefore more poignant. In Britain, she was more than a celebrity. Her royalty struck a deeper and more significant chord of national identity. She was a symbol of humanity in the midst of artifice, modernity in the heart of tradition, spontaneity in a country where ritual is often a substitute for life. Diana, in her coy and tortured way, was a passionate advocate of life before ritual. That is why she affected the British so deeply and why, perhaps, the crowds that massed in the days after her death were so disproportionately composed of the young. She represented a new kind of England, one that could break through the tradition and class and history that too often impede the more human needs of integrity and happiness. As I have tried to understand why the news has sent me into a kind of gnawing and deepening sadness these last few days, I can only offer this partial explanation. In burying Diana, the British have done more than bury a princess. In some way, we have buried a future.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

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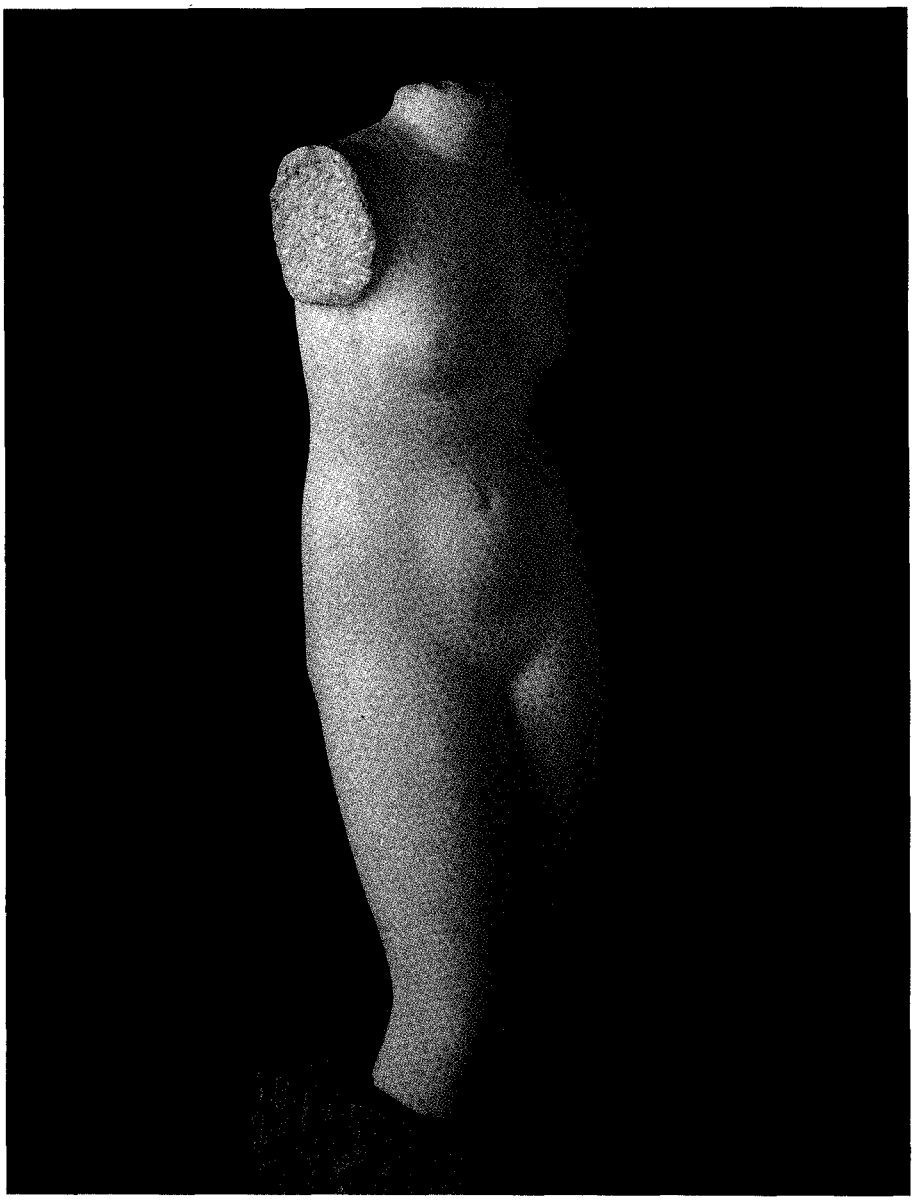
Elie Nadelman and the Classical Tradition



Female Nude, c. 1925–26. Marble, 42½ × 13 × 8½ inches

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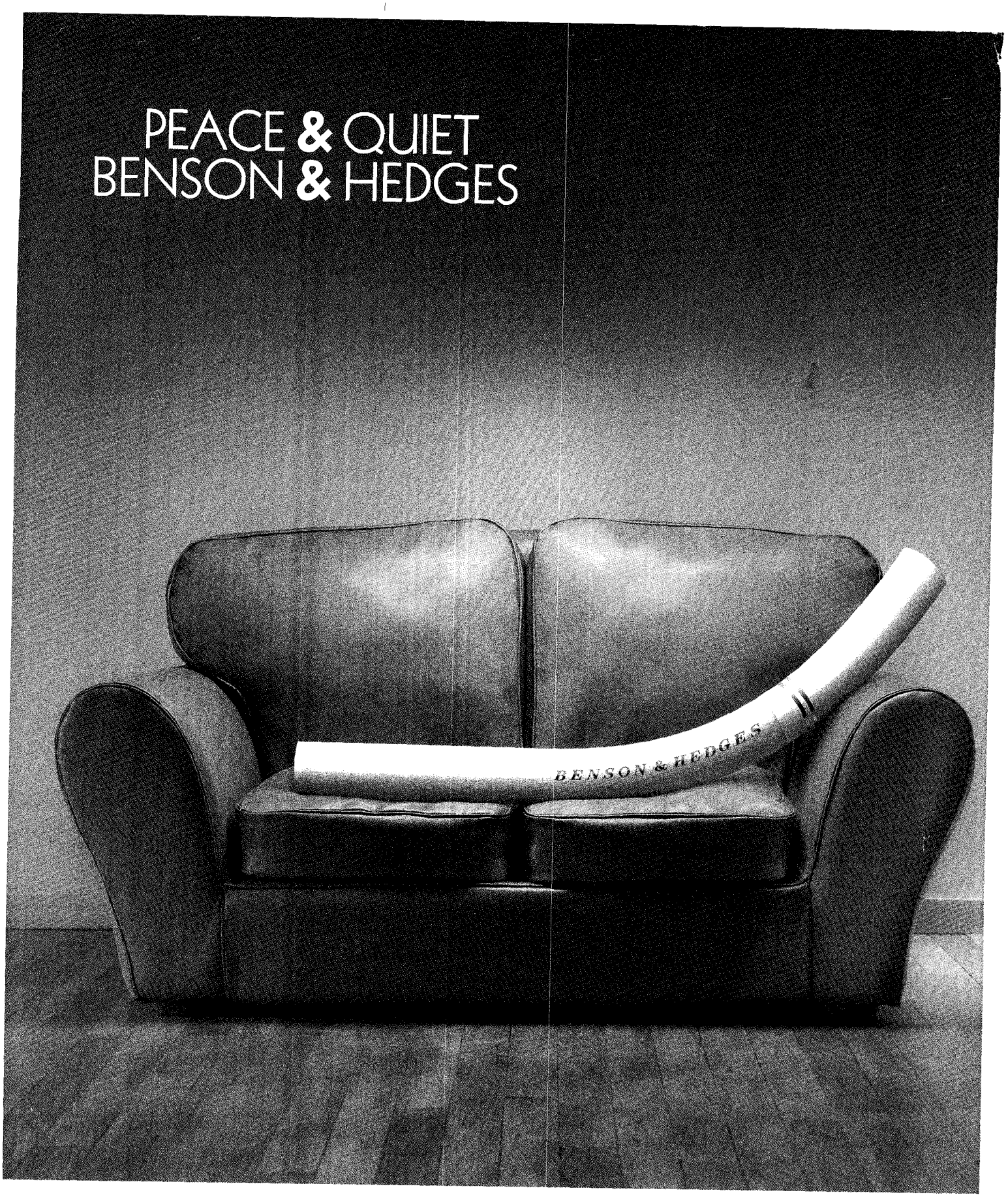

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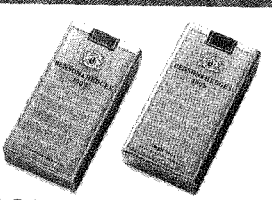

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